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EDITED BY W. SHAW SPARROW

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THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



"JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL." REPRODUCED FROM A LARGE COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAVURE,  $18\frac{1}{4}$  INCHES BY  $12\frac{1}{8}$  INCHES, BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., LONDON

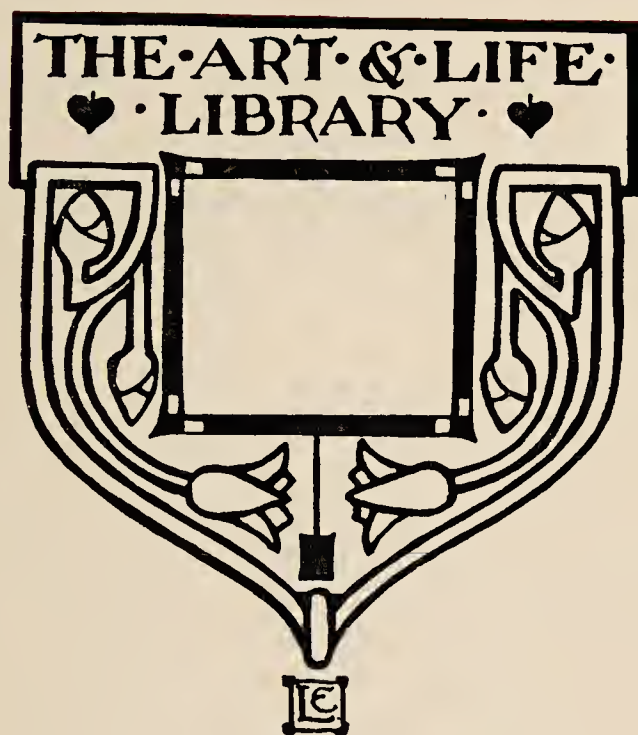
Eduard von Gebhardt, Modern German School



# THE · OLD TESTAMENT · IN · ART

FROM THE · CREATION · OF · THE · WORLD  
♥ TO · THE · DEATH · OF · MOSES ♥  
THE · TEXT · BY · THE · REV · CANON · J · DOBELL  
THE · REV · R · C · GILLIE · THE · REV · R · J · CAMPBELL  
DR · HANS · W · SINGER · & · LÉONCE · BÉNÉDITE ♥

EDITED BY  
W · SHAW · SPARROW



"ND  
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1873  
[v.1]"

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## PREFACE



URING the autumn of last year, in *THE GOSPELS IN ART*, the producers of the present book began a series of profusely illustrated works on Bible pictures, and the influence which the Bible has had upon the genius of painters in many ages and many lands. The subject of *THE GOSPELS IN ART* is, of course, the Life of Christ. In it the illustrations are arranged, not in accordance with the chronology of the pictures, but in obedience to the sequence of events in the sacred story; and as they belong to many centuries and countries, old work and new represent incidents that came side by side in the book, forming instructive contrasts both of religious outlook and of thought and style.

In this first volume on *THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART*, another portion of the Bible reveals itself in many illustrations, following the sequence of events related in the Scriptures. And here, too, as in *THE GOSPELS IN ART*, the treatment of the subject has obvious limitations determined by the size of the book and by the purpose of the general scheme. The aim is to appeal to all classes and to all homes, to gather within one volume a good and memorable selection of works by noteworthy painters, so as to form a pictorial companion to the Old Testament, but to exclude those pictures which might provoke controversy or give pain or offence in any religious circle. This applies particularly to pictures of the nude.

It is a pleasant duty to acknowledge the help received from the contemporary painters, and from the Duke of Sutherland, Mrs. Calderon, Mrs. Eleanor Coltart, Mr. H. S. Leon, Mr. Fred. Hollyer, Mr. Franz Hanfstaengl, Mr. Georg Brochner, Mr. James A. Manson, Mr. Charles Dalziel, Messrs. Virtue & Co., Messrs. Braun, Clément & Co., Messrs. Henry Graves & Co., Messrs. George Routledge & Sons, Monsieur Neurdein, Monsieur Bulloz, Messrs. Lévy & Sons, the Autotype Company, the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, the Manchester Art Gallery, the Leeds Art Gallery, the Art Union of London, and Messrs. W. A. Mansell and Co., the London agents for the well-known Italian photographers, Alinari, Brogi, and Anderson.

W. SHAW SPARROW.

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"ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE." AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE HERMITAGE GALLERY AT ST. PETERSBURG, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch School  
1606-1669

# The Subject Introduced and Reviewed

By Leonce Bénédite, Keeper of the Luxembourg  
Translated by Wilfrid Sparroy



Of course, the share devoted to the Old Testament in the plastic arts, and more especially in painting, is far from being equal to that which the New Testament claims, and the reason of this is so obvious that it is quite unnecessary to prove it. Nevertheless, if painting, an art essentially Christian, takes its source chiefly in the Gospels and the lives of the Saints, the Old Testament, on its side, fills a particularly noteworthy place as an inspiration to that art. This may be explained, now by its sacred character which is bound up with Christianity, and now by the wonderful lessons that it contains. Or, again, it may owe its influence to its incomparable poetic grandeur, or to the unexampled simplicity of its matchless beauty. And all these are reasons that have made it the Book of Humanity above all others.

It is not a mere history, even were that history considered as an account of a people that played an exceptional part in the advancement of civilization. It is something far more than the history of a human family ; for is it not indeed the history of Man ?

Again, as it is the first book that has ever solved the problem of the genesis of the world, so likewise is it the first that has ever given an answer to all those weighty questions that will never cease to engross the intellect. Essentially a book of ethics and of faith, it deals with the reason of life and the cause of death, with our bounden duty to work and our liability to suffering, with the knowledge of good and evil, and of right and wrong. If some have looked to it for their laws, others



## The Old Testament in Art

have tried to read in it their hopes' accomplishment, while to one and all it has been and will always remain a sure guide and consolation.

This is only saying what all those who have been the privileged interpreters of humanity have sought to glean from its teaching, always so lofty and divine. For each succeeding generation the world over has borrowed from this Book of Ages, according to its needs and its aspirations; and every school, in its turn, as a faithful spokesman of the thought of its own times, has interpreted the various emotions felt by mankind in reading the Holy Scriptures.

At the dawn of the Christian Era during the days of the catacombs, an image, as we know, had no virtue in particular other than that of expressing, by means of a sort of common language, as it were a rebus of unusual force, the impulses to sacrifice, that went hand in hand with the new faith. It spoke in symbols, giving a form to the old heathen myths no less than to the episodes of Holy Writ. People, living at the highest pitch of mental pressure, turned the image to account far more as a token of rallying, as a *labarum* or banner, than with the aim of presenting that which might serve as a means of instruction or an inducement to proselytism. Thus the personages in these Biblical scenes are emblematical characters rather than historical types. Noah, Moses, Jonah or David, it were easy to confound them all with Orpheus and Mercury; they stand also for the *Good Shepherd* so as to make known, by certain acts essential to their personality, the source of life eternal, the resurrection, or the triumph of faith. In a word, we are confronted with sacred hieroglyphics of a genuine sort.

Certain mosaics in Rome and at Ravenna show the physiognomy appropriate to these characters to be still far to seek. The Bible stories, with the men and women in Roman dress, are now conceived with a view to a ritualistic treatment, the favourite representations being the various sacrifices of the Old Testament, notably those of Abel and Melchizedek and Abraham, in reciprocal relation to the sacrifice of the mass. But



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by-and-by, figured beneath the portico of St. Mark's in Venice, we shall come across several scriptural subjects dating from the creation of the world down to Moses, wherein a hint of an artless observation of nature commingles with the traditional interpretation by symbols.

And then, despite the frenzies of the iconoclasts, the art of painting is summoned to play a new part—the part, namely, of prosecuting a great mission of general instruction that makes its appeal to the eye on purpose to get into touch with men's minds. For, as Pope St. Gregory said, "Painting must now fill the churches, in order that those who do not know their letters may at least read on the wall what they cannot read in the manuscripts."

And with this the art of painting begins to journey out into the world. True, the Byzantine dogmatism still pressed heavily upon the imaginations of the artists, who had not the right to modify the aspect of their pictures, the arrangement of these being canonically fixed by the Church; yet the subjects which up to then had seldom been treated as anything but symbols, were now handled realistically for the first time.

Thenceforward painting adopts a narrative style, illustrating, on the walls of the churches, convents, and cloisters, the two great cycles of the Holy Scriptures, and that by a system of reciprocal adaptation which aims at expounding the acts of the New Testament by the development of the Old. Over the whole of the creative work of art at that time there hovers a great legendary spirit, at once devotional, artless, and affecting. From Cimabue and Giotto to Masaccio and the great Florentine naturalists, this is the golden age of religious painting, and the one period above all others in which, notwithstanding the perpetual anachronism of setting these scriptural episodes amid the realities of contemporary life, the nature alike homely and heroic of these pastoral exploits and of these magnificent idylls has been best understood.

Indeed, you will have to pass over many generations and come to a little trading country of Protestants and Republicans,

## The Old Testament in Art

before ever you will find a genius competent beyond his fellows to penetrate, with equal candour and with a like perception of things human and divine, the unique splendour of these primeval narratives. To the vastness of them, no doubt, a few interpreters of exceptional abilities imparted an expression of nameless eloquence, in that great period of the 16th century which goes by the name of the Renaissance ; but this eloquence of theirs was won at the cost of the realistic, familiar, and (may I add ?) popular side of their subject to which it makes so fascinating and so touching an appeal. And, later, this particular characteristic will be seen to degenerate into rhetoric more or less brilliant, or more or less high-flown. This is true, almost without exception, from beginning to end of the 17th and 18th centuries, whilst the themes taken from the Holy Scriptures form, along with the mythological and Christian themes, a chapter in that wide repertory of academic subjects which artists generally make use of as picturesque moralities. And this conception will last until the 19th century, when, growing out of the dilettantism excited by the outburst of scientific curiosity and the critical study of history, the universal individualism prevailing in the schools fashions a few men of undeniable originality, whose genius succeeds in knitting together again the threads of the old traditions.

Now, of all the chapters in this Book of books, the most moving and the most impressive are unquestionably the ones contained in the Book of Genesis. For they illustrate the origin of the universe and also the origin of man ; they set forth the works of the Creator, and oppose to these the acts of His creature, who, through his weakness and his wretchedness, his infirmity of purpose and vanity, brings about his own misfortunes ; the toil and sickness, and war and death to which he is brought under subjection by the wrath of God. And after this first part, of a nature essentially religious and cosmogonic, resolving, as it does, the system of the world and the creation of man, we come to the most marvellous picture, not only of the patriarchal life of this original people, but also of the formation of the family and the tribe, from which nucleus the nation will subsequently spring,

## The Subject Introduced and Reviewed

in the tents of the first shepherds. All this is a sort of extraordinary epic poem, the most human and the most perfect which has ever been passed down to us by the memory of man ; while intermingling with the tenderest and purest of idylls, are stories the most remarkable in their noble simplicity.

And when I wrote the word " picture," I used precisely the term most appropriate to the style of these narratives, a style so concrete and so determined by the relief, colour and action, that the very images of these figures and surroundings, of these notabilities and scenes, are reproduced on the mind with a clear-cut vigour beyond compare. So that, apart from religious and moral motives, that inclined all artists to look to the Bible for inspiration, this particular character of the Holy Scriptures was framed ardently to woo their imagination.

Nevertheless, the first chapters of Genesis were long in finding an artistic realization worthy of their perennial beauty. Such exaltation of thought and sentiment passed the understanding of the artists who lived in those dark ages of our Christian history, for their life was narrow, their horizon limited, and their piety lined with simplicity and good nature. How, then, could they have grasped, much less attempted to depict pictorially, the notion of boundless space and the nature of the elements ? And how should they have learnt the secret of suggesting, in form and colour, the creative spontaneity of the Divine Will ? Or for the matter of that, how should they have burst asunder the shackles in which art was held fast by the Church ? They did the best they could with lucubrations more or less childish, in which God the Father (whom the earlier Christian painters had not yet imagined, and who was occasionally pictured as a Hand emerging from the clouds) was now represented in the venerable form of the first of the patriarchs.

Not until we come to the two greatest geniuses that have ever made modern times illustrious, shall we detect any idea of those matters surpassing all human conception—not an idea which realizes them, to be sure, but which is in keeping with their transcendent character. Indeed, the only pictures



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of the acts of the Creation capable of stirring our feelings to admiration are to be seen at the Vatican in the works of Michelangelo and Raphael. There, in the Sixtine Chapel, at the further end of the nave, appears, in all its awe and greatness, the fresco of the *Last Judgment*. Raise your head and look at the ceiling ! Upon it are unfolded the chief phases of the works of the Creation, side by side with the earliest episodes of man's life in Eden and on earth. God dividing the Light from the Darkness . . . God creating the Sun and the Moon. . . . God moving above the face of the waters—in rendering such inimitable spectacles as these, the great Florentine has scorned to employ the vain and empty tricks which go to the making of a showy phantasmagoria. Renouncing all idea of reproducing the heaven and earth, the elements and space, Michelangelo is content with conjuring up the figure of the Creator ; the heavenly messengers surrounding the Lord are angels or spirits, born of His divine breath, after the likeness of man, made in His own image ; and this august vision, as the artist was at pains to accomplish, is lifted to the highest pitch of excellence, as much by the unequalled majesty of the style, as by the unrivalled vigour and significance of the action. Let us take, for example, the panel representing the Creation of Man (page 40). As this scene excludes such cosmic schemes as are beyond the grasp of the human intellect, and composed as it is of characters of an anthropomorphic kind, nowhere in the whole realm of art, either before or since, is there a picture more striking, more sublime, than this presentment of the Almighty in the act of forming Adam of the dust of the ground—Adam, so noble and so beautiful, bearing, in his attitude of reposeful strength, a not unworthy resemblance to his Creator.

As for Raphael, whether we take the decorative paintings in what are termed the *Stanzas*, or whether we consider his decoration of the Corridors, where, with the assistance of his pupils Giulio Romano, Penni and others, he depicted on the vaulted ceilings of the famous gallery the principal events of the Old Testament as opposed to those of the New—it is again at the Vatican that we can form the best judgment as to the manner

## The Subject Introduced and Reviewed

in which his graphic genius grappled with these great sacred records. "God dividing the Light from the Darkness"—a particularly significant drawing, judiciously selected by Mr. Shaw Sparrow—"God separates the water from the Land," "God creates the Sun and the Moon," "The making of Eve," "The First Sin," "Adam and Eve cast out of Paradise," and many others; all these glorious spandrels prove that, if the young master of Urbino cannot compete with his puissant and haughty rival in manly fervency and impressiveness of touch, he nevertheless possessed, on his side, all the scope and all the unaffected sense of harmony and the beautiful which are essential to the adequate interpretation of these first chapters of Genesis.

The subject of Man and Woman fills a place apart in the history of modern art. Painting and sculpture vie with each other in repeating it on the altars and the porches of cathedrals as on the panels of triptychs. The garden of Eden in itself could serve as a pretext for the graphic playfulness of such Flemings of the 17th century as Snyders, Paul Bril or Velvet Brueghel, who saw in it an opportunity of displaying the virtuosity of their sensual skill. In like manner, for so serious a master as Poussin, it was made the subject of a noble landscape like the one at the Louvre, in which Eve rises to show the fatal tree to Adam who is seated (page 46). As a matter of fact, the outward appearances of the first human couple have in themselves especially engaged the artists of every school, who have looked at them from very different points of view. The distinguishing feature forced upon them in the churches is to point a moral, symbolizing the doctrine of Sin in contradistinction to that of the Redemption. Thus they are often seen in pictures as an accessory to the figure of our Saviour. This is so, for instance, in the case of the two exquisite shutters at the Brussels Museum, that formerly belonged to the panel of the "Mystic Lamb" in the Church of St. Bavon at Ghent. In these two figures by Van Eyck, with their naturalistic treatment which was his first care and which, still so fresh, is the harbinger of the great springtime of painting, we have one of the very noblest presentments of our first parents. Among other points

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of perfection, the head of his Adam, as much by its high distinction as by its stress of eager and enthusiastic youth, has never been excelled. If we take the Adam and Eve by Albrecht Dürer, or the many studies of the same subject by Cranach, as representing the countries of the North, before we come to the great works of Raphael and Michelangelo, as typifying those of the South, these figures of Van Eyck will be found to correspond to the group by Masolino of Adam and Eve cast out of their earthly Paradise, and more especially to the same subject by Masaccio, both of which are at Florence. The latter fresco, not less by the insight and truth shown in the anatomy than by its touching pathos, points unmistakably to the progress that has taken place in the artist's imagination. For the early impress of doctrinal teaching pure and simple is substituted a sympathetic understanding of nature, a taste for the nude that will grow quite decided with the study of the monuments of antiquity, and, lastly, a feeling for dramatic effect, altogether new and modern, the pathos being of a moral order to the exclusion of every other kind. In short, Masaccio paves the way for Raphael and Michelangelo and also for Tintoretto, who, with due earnestness, has likewise handled this great motive.

This, the great original sin of man and woman, the cause of all the ills of humanity, is succeeded in the lessons of the Church by all the other faults committed by weak and miserable man ere scarcely he was his own master. Thus the story of Cain and Abel, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by Fire, compose one by one an essential chapter in the lessons which painting professes to give in the spreading of religious principles. As time goes on they too will inspire in such masters as Titian or Tintoretto, Salvatore Rosa or Annibale Carracci, and among the moderns Girardet, Hippolyte Flandrin or Schnorr, Bouguereau or Cormon, all manner of paintings which are sometimes pathetic or realistic, and sometimes academic. The story of Noah, however, must be mentioned in a quite especial way, for if the tragic affections of mankind throughout all ages, ancient and modern, have been stirred by





HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE WILDERNESS. REPRODUCED FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY PERMISSION OF BRAUN, CLEMENT & CO., PARIS

J. B. C. Corot, French School  
1796-1875





## The Subject Introduced and Reviewed

the scenes of the Deluge, the facts in the life of Noah have in themselves been of lively interest to the imagination of mankind. The building of the Ark, for instance, is a happy subject, that has beguiled every artist from Raphael down to Bassano (page 55), who delighted in this excellent opportunity of painting all sorts of animals, nor will his brothers of the brush in Holland and Flanders be slow to follow his example. If among modern painters the Deluge could be a subject predestined, as it were, to engage a genius like Turner (page 58), to G. F. Watts, whose fine historic sense entered with so much discernment into the spirit of the Bible, the Building of the Ark (page 56) and the end of the Deluge (page 61) have been the motives of several works of great power or pathos. But the most charming interpretation of this beautiful story, that inaugurates the series dealing with the pastoral life of the Jews, and the one that is likely to hold its own, is the set of admirable frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli in the Campo Santo at Pisa.

The panel is divided into three unbroken scenes. In the middle one Noah draws near in a rich dress, accompanied by a young woman, who holds a cup in one hand and a flask in the other. He is followed by other figures of lordly youths and lovely damsels in procession. On the left stretches the vintage scene ; it is the most lifelike and bewitching of all. Noah, gravely patriarchal of bearing, is leaning on his youngest son, his beard blowing over his gorgeous robes. Behind him some young women standing on ladders are gathering grapes from a vine-arbour, that, by a happy stroke, adorns the background of the composition. Other women are reaching out their baskets or emptying them into a vat, in which a young man, his arms akimbo, is treading the dripping bunches under foot. On the right a beautiful Italian palace with pillars and porticos. Stretched on the threshold is Noah, tipsy with the strong drink. The women run away, but one of them, more inquiring than the rest, attempts to peep through her open fingers, whilst the youngest sons, Shem and Japheth, graceful Florentine lads, turning aside their serious faces, throw their cloaks over their father's nakedness.

## The Old Testament in Art

Not less successful is Gozzoli in illustrating the history of Abraham. It serves him as an excellent excuse for gathering together all sorts of rich and mighty seigniors magnificently dressed in garments half Italian and half Oriental. These he either groups together on the threshold of marble palaces, or else sets them at the head of cavalcades of noble lords and beautiful young women. On they go through charming country fields, full of action and variety, where the orange trees blossom abundantly, or the palms stretch out their plume-like branches, while overhead a flight of doves lends to the airy sky a touch of life.

The truth is that the history of Abraham is one of those that have met with the best fortune at artists' hands. Certainly it deserved no less a favour. From the time of Abraham to Moses, indeed, the Scriptural narrative takes a new turn of style. Other portions of the Old Testament may show more power and pomp and more colour and life, but in noble simplicity and stately grandeur none can excel it, nor on occasions can be it equalled in freshness and grace. This patriarchal cycle relates the sudden changes of fortune in the nomadic life of the Jews before they were finally settled as a nation in the Holy Land. For Israel it will ever stand as the purest expression of its ideal of family and religious life. Later the Prophets will lead back the mind of their contemporaries again and again to this golden age of the shepherd life. This part of the Holy Scriptures is composed of three main episodes, namely, the history of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

Abraham, then, among the notables in the Bible, was one that appealed more than most to the artistic imagination. From the very beginning a select place was accorded him. Adam is the father of men, but he is unknown except by his sin and his misfortunes. Abraham, on the other hand, is the father of nations, and the elect of the Most High, he is the trunk of the genealogical tree from which will spring all the kings of Israel, ending in Jesus. With the building of the earliest churches, moreover, the various events in the patriarch's life are to be



## The Subject Introduced and Reviewed

met with. First, his blessing by Melchizedek, high priest and king of Salem, who brings forth the loaves of bread, a symbol of the bloodless sacrifice as opposed to the burnt offering. Next, Abraham making ready to sacrifice Isaac, out of obedience to the Eternal. Then, as is seen in one of the mosaics at the church of St. Vitalis at Ravenna, Abraham entertaining the three angels, messengers from heaven.

In more modern times some of these topics have enlisted the imaginative faculty of artists, on their tragic or their pathetic side. Now the sacrifice of Isaac is used as an excellent ground idea by such masters as Andrea del Sarto, (page 86), Rembrandt (page 9), or Tintoretto (page 87), to say nothing of such a fine rhetorician as Rubens. Anon the subject chosen is the flight of Lot during the destruction of the iniquitous cities (*see* pages 80 and 81), or else—and how often this has been treated, from Rubens to Corot!—the disobedience of his wife, who becomes a pillar of salt (*see* pages 82 and 83). The favourite one of all, however, is the story of Abraham's handmaid, Hagar, who is cast forth and deserted along with her son Ishmael. But, fascinating as this has proved to many an artist's noble mind since Claude Lorrain, it has been treated most sympathetically by the moderns, and that on account of its particularly sentimental nature.

As for the story of Isaac, the confusion is that it runs on the one side into Abraham's and on the other into Jacob's. But one episode it can claim as its own, that is one of the most delightful in the Bible. This is the meeting of Eliezer, Abraham's head servant, with Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother. To its numerous interpreters it has always brought good luck. Among others, notice may be taken of the beautiful and earnest rendering by Poussin (page 87) and by Decamps (page 89). The latter transferred his scene to the open fields of Syria's broken and picturesque landscape. Horace Vernet, struck by the Arab costume, had taken a leaf out of the same book, by transporting the Biblical surroundings to Algeria, recently conquered. This sort of interpretation, although its realism soon

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fell into academism and conventionality, yet won a great deal of success and created, in religious painting, what may be called an ethnographical fashion. It flourished in Germany and in England, as well as in France, where the most brilliant, as well as the most ingenious, representatives have been James Tissot and Etienne Dinet (page 85).

The same idyllic and pastoral spirit is found again in the history of Jacob. This wary shepherd, ever on his guard, a sort of Jewish Ulysses, if ever there was one, for ever famous for the crafty tricks he played on his brother Esau, that red-haired and stalwart hunter, has provided artists with material without end. The charming story of his abode in Laban's house, with his love for Rachel, always thwarted by his uncle's greed; his return to his own place, and his meeting with Esau, not forgetting the two famous episodes of the vision of Jacob's ladder and his wrestling with the angel, that have assumed such a high symbolical character; all these wonderful Bible pictures seem, of their own accord, to have framed themselves anew in the painter's brain. Their praises have been sung by all in rivalry. Ancients and moderns, the Italians, Dutch, Spanish, French, English, Germans, all have contributed their quota: Raphael or Palma, Rembrandt or Murillo, Poussin or Delacroix, G. F. Watts or E. von Gebhardt.

All the same it is Joseph's history which is by far the most astounding. In charm, as in the marvellous, it outruns the tales of the Thousand and One Nights. With its logical sequence and its stirring turns of fortune, and with an interest that never flags, it is a pure romance. Nothing is lacking. We have variety, psychology, pathos, and morals. If we think of the childhood of Joseph, his two dreams, the jealousy of his brothers who sell him to the Ishmaelites; then his sojourn in the land of Egypt, his adventures with the wife of Pharaoh's chief marshal, his downfall and sudden advancement; later again, his meeting with his brothers and how he sought to prove them, and the shifts he was at to stay his brother Benjamin; and, last of all, the triumphal arrival of the old patriarch Jacob at the

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house of his son Joseph, who by the fulfilment of the dreams has become, as it were, the viceroy of the kingdoms in the valley of the Nile—what tale, what poem, what romance is more complete or more enthralling? Now among the host of painters whom this book has inspired, as for instance, Andrea del Sarto at Florence or Raphael at the Vatican, Rembrandt was one who had an especial predilection for it. To his feeling for the delightfully popular and homely, a sense that enables him to penetrate these Bible stories with as artless a mind as the most unsophisticated of the Primitives, he adds a perception of the marvellous that expresses itself in the most unexpected effects of light and shade; and this is a combination that is more suitable than any other to reproduce pictorially the colour and high relief of the style of the Old Testament.

To the chief incidents in the life of Joseph he returns again and again. Joseph relating his dreams, Jacob weeping over Joseph's blood-stained coat, Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph: all these sacred subjects are translated with the deepest feeling for humanity and with a sober Oriental picturesqueness of touch which makes them the most inimitable of Bible pictures.

The story of Joseph, remember, owes its popularity to other sources than the Bible narratives as we know them. Arabian literature has borrowed and tricked it out anew, dressing it in all sorts of fascinating details outside the facts, and it is to this Arab version that Etienne Dinet is indebted for one of his very finest works of genius. The scene is laid in an oasis in a nook rounded with mystery. It is night. Through the swaying palm trees twinkle some of the brightest stars in the heavens. The steward's beautiful wife is seated, decked in all her jewels, like an idol, while her serving-women, in similar array, are sitting around her. Her companions question her as to the cause of her sorrow, and she replies, "When you see Sidna Yousouf, my Lord Joseph, then you will understand the bitterness of my grief." And, truth to tell, Joseph, young, noble, sad and handsome, is sitting at her side, and so overcome are the young women by his manly grace and beauty that, instead of peeling the oranges, they



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all sharpen their finger tips with their knives. They have gone off in a muse.

Wonderful and magnificent, the books of Moses, and particularly Exodus, are a veritable epopee dominated by the masterful figure of the first prophet. A tragic and spirited story, full of wonders and dramatic vicissitudes, it begins with what serves as a charming prologue, the birth of Moses. As for the scene where Pharaoh's daughter, going down to wash herself at the river, discovers the ark of bulrushes in which the babe lies, it is a picture ready made and no school at any time has missed the opportunity of realizing it, in its own way. Now Raphael and his pupils make the most of it as a sumptuous and pleasing picture (page 137), now Giorgione and Paolo Veronese do the like. The latter, who has painted the subject more than once (pages 138 and facing 140), has brought to the task all the brilliancy and gorgeousness of the Venetian school. His is a setting that is nothing if not contemporary; he shows us a youthful queen, crowned with a diadem and richly dressed in brocade, receiving from her handmaidens the little child lying on a silk kerchief. She is surrounded by her waiting women, by her lords and her guards, nothing being left out of the picture, not even her dwarf and her hounds. Poles, Spaniards, Frenchmen, the Dutch, some more realistic, others more academic, will find this an admirable idea for grouping young women in a sunny landscape around the chubby body of a rosy *bambino*. In contemporary times there is nobody up to Paul Delaroche but owes to this episode one of his most delightful inspirations.

But Moses, although the Bible portrays him as a man alike gentle and modest, has become so transfigured in the imagination, not of the artists merely, but of the nations of the world as well, that he retains no vestige of this lovable and child-like delineation of his nature. A superhuman figure, surpassing all other Empire builders, he towers over the whole history of the Jewish people. As he was the first that saw the Almighty face to face on the holy mountain, so also was he the first to work miracles in His name and to proclaim His law. First Christianity



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heralded him as its own, and then later, Islamism. His brow was decked, now with horns, emblems of all power and dominion, and again with starry rays, symbolizing the divine light in which he was bathed on Mount Sinai. In the Spanish Chapel at Florence he is seen sitting in conference with the great lawgivers. A book of hours of the 14th century, preserved at the National Library in Paris, goes so far as to show him seated at the Virgin's side on a throne. Thus, among the subjects borrowed from the Old Testament, the story of his life fills the first place as the chief source of inspiration to artists ; and the Colossus himself found in Michelangelo the mind that was to imagine him, no less than the hand that was to give him an imperishable memory in the world of art. The greatest names are associated with the adventures recorded in this magnificent epic, which, beginning in a manner so affecting, ends with melancholy aloofness in the Prophet's death, on the very threshold of the promised land into which he had just brought his people. Along with Raphael at the Vatican, we have Luca Signorelli, Botticelli, Cosimo Rosselli, Pintoricchio, Piero di Cosimo, and those great Florentine and Umbrian painters who, one and all, following the example of Gozzoli at Pisa, convert these gallant deeds into pictures of incomparable beauty. Whether they paint such pastoral scenes as Moses meeting the daughters of Jethro, or as Moses with his wife and children, or whether they choose the tragic side, as in the death of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, or in the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, they display by turn their exquisite sense of the beautiful, their taste for noble rites and ceremonies, their love for the things of nature, and their naturalistic vision, at once cultured, keen and vigorous.

At Venice the same qualities obtain ; in fact, Moses may be said to be a character dear to the heart of all Venetian painters. From Giorgione to Tiepolo, passing by Tintoretto, whose austere and impassioned brush was particularly fond of this striking figure, and also by such men as Titian or Veronese, Palma the Younger or Salviati, Liberi or Bassano, the heroic march of Moses in the wilderness, and above all, the episodes of the brazen serpent,

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the golden calf, the spring gushing from the rock, and more especially still the oft-repeated incident of the manna, cover the walls of the palaces, churches and colleges. In the other European schools, the great lawgiver excited artists to the same pitch of adulation; more particularly is this the case in modern times, and France, where the Burgundian sculptors will carve, with energetic and effective realism, the well of Moses, in the Chartreuse. at Dijon—France has found at the head of her school a guide more qualified by his earnestness and eloquence than any other to portray the awe-commanding lineaments of the Great Prophet. And this master of ours is Poussin, who, with faultless touch in keeping with the elevated style of the Bible, painted the miraculous bunch of grapes in the land of Canaan. He set his scene in a modest yet delightful corner of that Land of Promise in which Moses, God's elect, was about to establish the little people destined to become so great a nation, the Land of Promise in which he himself was condemned never to make his home.

LEONCE BENÉDITE.





THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



"THE FIRST DAY OF THE CREATION."



"THE SECOND DAY OF THE CREATION."

FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart., Modern British School  
1833-1898



# The Creation to the Dispersion of Mankind

By the Rev. Joseph Dobell, Canon of St. Asaph



It is certain that the early chapters of the Book of Genesis have exercised a powerful influence on the mind of Artists, and through the work of Artists upon the mind of mankind, especially in days when very few were able to read.

Upon the more imaginative of us, these early chapters act as a powerful stimulant to a reverent imagination. Their grandeur, their simplicity, the way in which they reverently sketch great outlines leaving these to be filled up by reverent thought and devout contemplation, are marvellously helpful. From the nature of the case, they affect different minds in different ways. To take an instance, how many of us have found it helpful to think in the following way of the first chapter of the Bible.

We picture to ourselves the man to whom the revelation was given. A grave-eyed thoughtful man in the wide stretches of Arabia some 6,000 years ago. He has long pondered over the mystery of his own existence and of this wonderful world in which he lives, and in a vision of the night, "when deep sleep falleth upon men," the revelation comes. But in what form does it come? Does it take the form of our modern scientific discoveries? Nay, that were impossible. No brain of man that then existed could take in such an idea as that of the earth revolving rapidly in space around the central sun. It needed long centuries of mental training before such a thought could be possible. No scraps of our twentieth century science would have been of any profit to that earnest-souled son of the East. What he needed was this, to know that the world did not come into being by some extraordinary accident; to be set free from the notion (which would make any true religion impossible) that

## The Old Testament in Art

the world was made partly by malicious spirits whose moral characters were baser than his own, and to know that the world was all made by one God, the God whom he worshipped, the God to whom he looked up with reverence. And this was granted to him. In a vision of the night he became aware of a great formless waste, a vast chaos of waters, of which in its darkness he could have no consciousness save for the presence of the Spirit of God. And then he heard the great voice which commanded "Let there be Light," and the dull waters glimmered in the sudden brightness. And the morning came and he awoke, and the first stage of the Revelation was complete, "and the Evening and the Morning were the First Day." The Revelation was continued. For five successive nights a new vision was granted to him; the firmament of Heaven, the appearing of land, the growth of trees, the lights in the sky, the moving things of the waters, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the earth, and finally man, the lord of the created world. And then, so far as man is concerned, the great tale of Creation is finished, and the Sabbath begins. The Sabbath, which should have been a long age of restful obedience. Which *should* have been! Ah, the pity of it!

The pious son of the East has now received the revelation which he needed, not (that is) knowledge to make of him a learned scientific man of our twentieth century, but the knowledge needful to make him a devout, god-fearing man, 6,000 years ago. Can we not imagine how he would go forth and gather around him, near the rock on the grassy strip which bordered the desert sand, a group of dark-browed listeners? How they would hang upon his lips as he poured forth the wondrous tale that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth?" And so the first chapter of Genesis was given to the world, to have an influence in the world which none of us can calculate. From it, age after age, these important thoughts have been sinking slowly, deeply, into the heart and mind of men—that the world was made by a God who calls upon us to love Him, that the creation was an orderly work, that it was gradual, that there was a clear definite purpose underlying the Creator's work.

## The Creation to the Dispersion of Mankind

These thoughts, becoming almost unconsciously the thoughts of the human mind, how much they must have laid the foundation of all true modern science, who among us can say ?

And then the story of Eden, the Garden of God, the Park or Paradise of the Lord. How it holds up before our minds what a human life might be, Adam's simple life of trust in God, the life of one who day by day *received* life and did not try to live ; a life in communion and friendship with God, happy in not imagining anything better than to receive the life gratefully from God day by day. And, underlying it, the possibility that man might choose to sever himself from happy communion with God ; that man might give up trusting God and be unwilling to go on receiving life as a gift ; that man might imagine a life for himself, chosen by himself, apart from God. And, if this were to be, it would mean to Adam the loss of all that made life worth living, it would mean the loss of the truth of the meaning of human life (that man is dependent from moment to moment on God's hand), it would mean the flight of joyful trust and happy confidence and the entrance of suspicion and distrust and shame.

"Never glad confident morning again."

This experience of the world's childhood ; it has been reproduced in the life experience of (perhaps) every thoughtful child. There has come into the child's life the vision of being perfectly happy with God, doing God's will, being a good child and living in the sunshine of God's smiling approval. And this has lasted for a day, not a very long day. Something went wrong, some cloud came between the child and God, and the vision of a strange possible happiness melted away. Why ? Probably always because the child's attitude towards God took the form of having a law to obey and nothing much more. The human mind has a tendency to "stand over against" God, as though God and the soul are two independent parties to a bargain ; so much goodness on one side and so much favour on the other. And as the human mind is in no sense independent, there is thus a fatal flaw in the soul's attitude towards God.

And then the story of the lost Eden. How closely



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does that blend itself with the world-wide pathetic feeling of "something lost," something missing, something which need not have been missing, all the seemingly infinite sadness of thinking about "what might have been" and the days that are no more. "The tender grace of a day that is dead will never come back to me." The lost Eden. Doubtless the memory of it, the reality of the loss, would be kept in the mind of many a son of the Arabian desert by his own experience. He is weary with his journey across the sand, tired and worn and thirsty, struggling onward under the burning rays of the sun. He pictures to his own mind something far otherwise, a land of green grass, and fruitful trees, and cool rivers, and refreshing springs. And, as he thinks of it, there it is before him! A mirage of the desert, the very land that he longs for, quiet, coolness, rest, refreshment for the weary wanderer! There just in sight. And we also! Often, on a weary day, when life seems to be all worry and care and perhaps loneliness as well, there comes up before the mind, suddenly, with nothing to account for it, a vision of perfect peace, as if a curtain had been swiftly drawn aside. But, ere we can take our breath, the curtain instantly closes again and the vision is gone.

When Adam was condemned, it was in "the cool of the day." The midday heat was past. When he was driven out eastwards, the evening had come and the sunset. Driven out, he turned, and looked back westward. And we know what we so often see when in the evening we look out across the plains to the west. We see a flashing ray of light to our right, another to our left, other bright beams downwards to the ground, literally a "flaming sword which turns every way." And many a reverent soul gazing thereon has thought gratefully, "Yes! we whom God has so long been teaching that He is a God of love, a God who forgives, a God reconciled to man, when we look westward, we see and rejoice in the glory of the setting sun. Adam, as he looked westward, in the first blackness of his impenitence and resentment and misery, saw the flaming sword of God's angel turning every way to guard the entrance to Paradise and to keep the way of the tree of life."



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



CAIN AND ABEL. REPRODUCED AFTER THE PLATE MADE BY MESSRS. GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD. (DALZIEL'S BIBLE GALLERY, 1880)

Lord Leighton, P.R.A., Modern British School  
1830-1896







## The Creation to the Dispersion of Mankind

And again in the flashing light downwards and across a devout fancy may discern the figure of the Cross, as if the very Light of God which barred the way would hereafter shape itself into the door by which man should gain the right of entry once more. After the first three chapters of the Bible the garden of Eden, the Paradise of God, disappears from the sight of men. Only there lingers in the heart of men a remembrance of something infinitely good but infinitely far away ; the very best that man has is "even as the garden of the Lord," the Eden quite vanished and gone. But on the Cross of Calvary, when the Christ and his companions are so near Death's River that their feet are now being "dipped in the water of Jordan," behold, the long-lost country reappears again. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The work of stimulating reverent imagination in the human mind which is done by the Bible stories, is also the work which is done by really good Bible pictures. But if they are to have this effect upon us, we must ourselves contribute something. First, we must bring with us the instinct of reverence. The pictures are the work of reverent artists seeking to express their reverence in their art. If we consider their works with no sense of reverence ourselves, we must of necessity fail of the benefit which they otherwise would bring.

Again, we should do well (the most of us) to consider such works with some measure of humility. We are probably unable to take in the fulness of meaning which was in the mind of the artist. Even Ruskin would sometimes hesitate before a devout religious picture, and say tentatively that he thought its meaning was this or that, but that he did not feel sure. And a sense of humility will make us aware that, although we can see only such and such meanings, yet men of great artistic gifts will see much more and probably many things differently ; the truth that we see is helpful and of value to us, though but a small thing compared with the higher truth discernible by men of artistic insight.

Thirdly, we should come with a readiness to *take*

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*pains* to learn, so far as in us lies, the teaching which a picture has for us. Ruskin again set us an example here of long and patient study of masterpieces of art. There is among us too much of the mental indolence which makes us dislike any book or picture which requires study and research. We ask for Bible pictures that are mawkish and sentimental, and so tempt artists to produce work which is full of disrespect and irreverence. The old translators of the Bible were themselves transformed by the Bible's influence into poets. And if artists in like manner cannot be transformed into poets, have they any right to choose subjects from the Bible?

Again, as in the Bible, so in good Bible pictures, we should be prepared to find not one meaning, but many, and no meaning so found is without its truth, provided it be reverent and helpful. For instance, in Burne-Jones's "Sixth Day of Creation" (page 39), study the angel seated at the foot with a musical instrument (a lute, is it not?) In that, one mind would see a symbol of the fact that, now that man is created, the new creation has the power of praising God. "Awake up, my glory," the glory of a soul capable of glorifying its God. Another may be reminded that when "God saw everything that He had made and pronounced it to be good," there must have been great joy in heaven: "Songs of praise the angels sang." Another will see in the attitude of the seated angel a reminder of the six days being closed in with the Sabbath, the day of rest.

The pictures show us how Bible subjects have been treated in many times and countries. We see how artists have treated those subjects as if the Bible times were contemporary with their own, the tools, the specialized breeds of animals, the dress, the ornaments being those of their own day. In the same way, one age after another has told of the Bible events in their own style of language, the natural language of each passing generation. Without any affectation, the artist gave his whole attention to the task of uttering his own conception. If he can move us with that conception, his helpful work to us is done. And it is to be remembered that it is possible for an artist to be so

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anxious to be accurate in his archæology and historic correctness that he may succeed only in chilling the imagination instead of stimulating it. We lose much if the artist in his pursuit of "local colour," antiquarian preciseness, details of unessential correctness, spoils the appeal of his work as Art. From the Art point of view, there is not one Christ or one Moses, but as many as are the reverent conceptions of artists capable of moving the religious imaginations of men. And correctness of archæology is of no value save in so far as it serves to complete a conception.

In looking through the pictures, the reader will again and again be interested in seeing how different minds have caught different glimpses of truth. In pages 33, 35, 36, 40, he will see the impression made upon men who were themselves men of great power, the stupendous force, the almightiness which was made manifest in the great work of Creation. Again, he will find the contrast between the early and the late pictures of the Creation interesting in many ways, especially perhaps in this, that in the early ones it is God Himself who is brought prominently forward as accomplishing the work of Creation, whereas in the later ones the work is represented as the work of the angels, God Himself being behind it all. And the reason of the contrast is, surely, not far to seek. The early pictures belong to a day of simpler faith, when the haze of modern doubt had not come upon us with its cloud. It was easy to think of God and God's power with a complete simplicity. But the days of modern thought were to come, and modern thought brought many questionings and many perplexities. And the outlook upwards beyond the details of everyday life became more and more mysterious. And the mystery seemed best expressed by the representation of angels entrusted with the creative work, God Himself remaining shrouded in darkness. The old positiveness of certainty was to give place to the mystery of uncertainty, preparing the way, I doubt not, for a yet nobler and deeper reverence and self-distrust in the days that shall be.

In conclusion, it were well to express the gratitude which so many of us feel to those who have given to the world



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the great Bible pictures. Little as we may know, we feel somehow that to the execution of them there has gone, not only an expenditure of infinite pains, but also a very deep reverence. We know some well-meaning Bible illustrations which carry with their good meaning some measure of suggestion of the ludicrous. And remembering this, we in part understand the great patience of labour and patience of self-restraint which have been needed to produce the best Biblical art. To take two instances from the "Noah" pictures, one feels thankful for the helpfulness of Noah's reverent face and attitude in the painting by Daniel Maclise (page 63), and for the instruction and guidance of the picture by Bell Scott (page 57).

"The Eve of the Deluge" shows us the time when the world was "marrying and giving in marriage," and Noah obeyed God's command and fled from the wrath to come upon the pomps and vanity of a very evil world. Noah, the preacher of righteousness, the first of the long, long line of persecuted prophets and Divine messengers—Noah alone (save for the household under his authority), alone against a sneering, insulting world, reckoned by the mocking revellers to be crazed by his earnest thoughts because, forsooth, his ways were not the world's ways.

Noah lived to triumph in a godly fashion over the enemies who had mocked him. And so did his successors the suffering prophets who succeeded him; but to many of them the triumph had to stand over till the coming of the rest that remaineth unto the people of God. *Here* the end that men saw was . . . .

"The strong pathetic  
Face of a wounded prophet gazed, and then  
Sank in God's darkness grandly  
From out the infinite littleness of men."

J. DOBELL.



## THE CREATION



GOD DIVIDES THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING IN THE WEIMAR GALLERY, FROM A  
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Attributed to  
Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
1483-1520



## THE CREATION



"AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT AND THERE WAS LIGHT." REPRODUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL MEZZOTINT

John Martin, British School  
1789-1854



"AND GOD CALLED THE DRY LAND EARTH." AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO  
FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by  
Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
Executed by Giulio Romano



## THE CREATION



GOD SEPARATES THE WATER FROM THE LAND. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ALINARI, ROME

Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine School  
1475-1564



GOD CREATES THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BROGI

Planned and Supervised by  
Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
Executed by Giulio Romano



THE CREATION



GOD CREATES THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL, ROME, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH  
BY ALINARI

Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine School

1475-1564



## THE CREATION



GOD CREATES THE FISH OF THE SEA, THE FOWL OF THE AIR, AND THE BEASTS OF THE EARTH. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE DORIA GALLERY, ROME, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON.

Paul Bril, Flemish School

I554-1626



## THE CREATION



THE THIRD DAY OF THE CREATION



THE FOURTH DAY OF THE CREATION

AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURES IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR ALEXANDER HENDERSON,  
FROM COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart., Modern British School  
1833-1898



## THE CREATION



THE CREATION OF ANIMAL LIFE



THE CREATION OF MAN

AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURES IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR ALEXANDER HENDERSON,  
FROM COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart., Modern British School

1833-1898



THE CREATION



THE CREATION OF ADAM. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL, REPRODUCED FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine School

1475-1564



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



THE HEAD OF ADAM. FROM THE FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL REPRESENTING THE CREATION OF ADAM,  
REPRODUCED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine School

1475-1564







THE GARDEN OF EDEN, AND THE BIRTH OF EVE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE IMPERIAL MUSEUM, VIENNA, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY  
BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO, PARIS

Frans Snyders, Flemish School

I579-I657



## THE CREATION



THE CREATION OF EVE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH  
BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904



## THE CREATION



"SHE SHALL BE CALLED WOMAN"



THE BIRTH OF EVE

FROM COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School

1817-1904



## THE FALL



EVE TEMPTED



EVE REPENTANT

AFTER THE PICTURES IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART, FROM COPYRIGHT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



THE GARDEN OF EDEN. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE BERLIN GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Jan Brueghel, Flemish School

1568-1625







## THE FALL



EVE TEMPTED. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Modern French School



THE FALL



EVE TEMPTS ADAM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY  
BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Nicolas Poussin, French School  
1594-1665



## THE FALL



THE CHERUBIM AND THE FLAMING SWORD

REPRODUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL MEZZOTINT

John Martin, British School

1789-1854



THE FALL



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FROM PARADISE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING AT VENICE,  
FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Bernardino Luini, Milanese School

About 1475-after 1533



ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FROM PARADISE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING  
IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

1483-1520





ADAM AND EVE DRIVEN FORTH FROM PARADISE: THE FIRST NIGHT OF THEIR ANGUISH. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ORIGINAL PICTURE  
COPYRIGHT, 1903, BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Auguste Zwiller, Modern French School



## CAIN AND ABEL



THE DEATH OF ABEL. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE DORIA GALLERY, ROME, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

Salvatore Rosa, Neapolitan School

1615-1673



## CAIN AND ABEL



THE ALMIGHTY CONDEMNS CAIN TO PERPETUAL BANISHMENT FROM THE REGION OF EDEN. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING IN THE ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

C. W. E. Dietrich or Dietrich, German School

1712-1774



# CAIN AND ABEL



ABEL. PAINTED IN 1874-75. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LUXEMBOURG, PARIS, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY LÉVY & SONS, PARIS

Camille Félix Bellanger, Modern French School





"THE FIRST DEATH." REPRODUCED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH, BY PERMISSION OF BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

William Adolphe Bouguereau, Modern French School  
died 1905





HISTORY OF CAIN

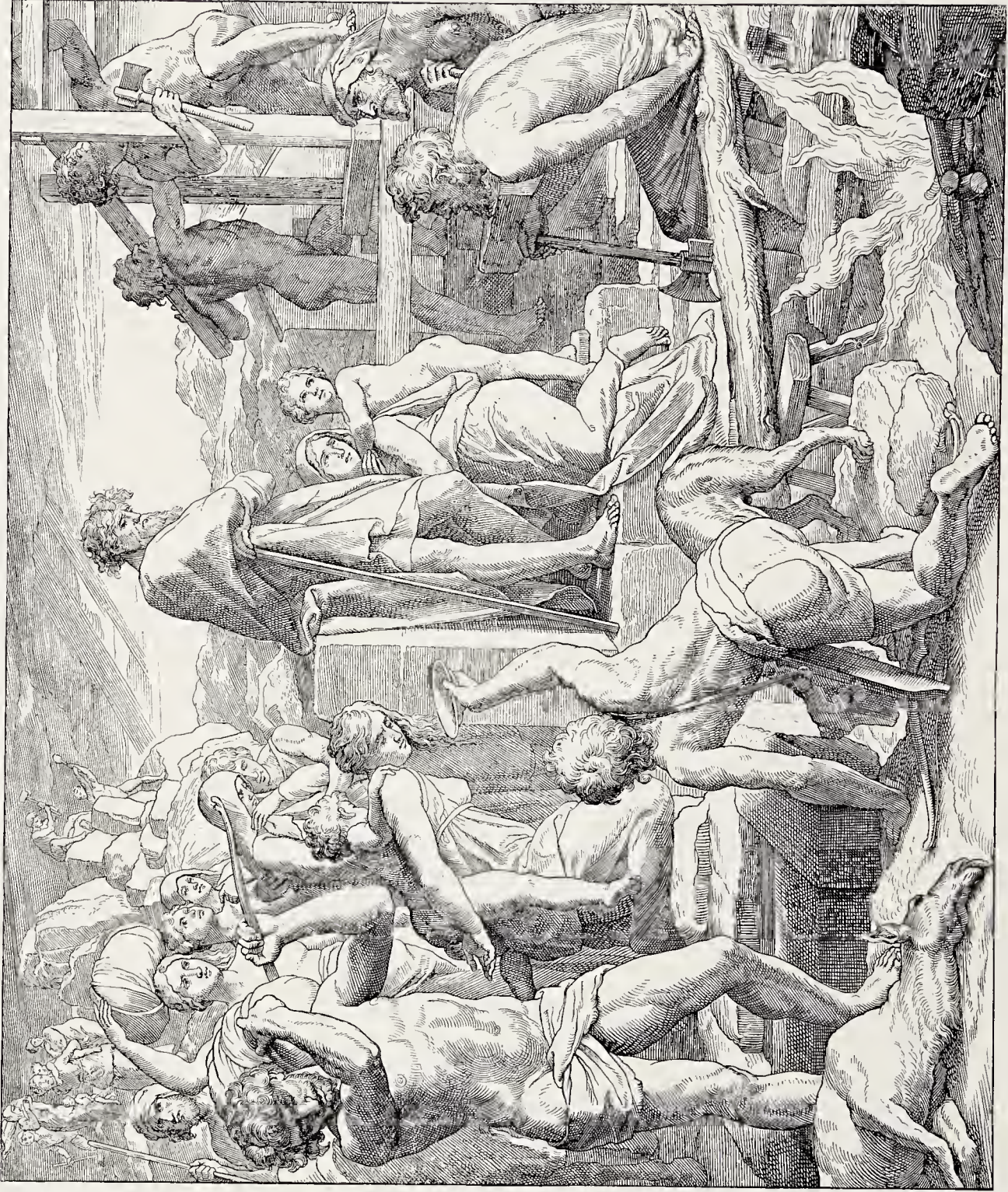


CAIN AND HIS FAMILY. PAINTED IN 1880. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LUXEMBOURG, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY LÉVY & SONS, PARIS

Fernand Cormon, Modern French School



# HISTORY OF CAIN



CAIN BUILDS THE CITY OF ENOCH. FROM THE ORIGINAL WOODCUT PUBLISHED IN 1860 BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG, IN A SERIES OF 240 BIBLE PICTURES

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872



## HISTORY OF NOAH



NOAH BUILDS THE ARK. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON

Planned and Supervised by  
 Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
 Executed by Giulio Romano and G. F. Penni



NOAH BUILDS THE ARK. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON AFTER THE PAINTING IN THE DORIA GALLERY, ROME

Jacopo da Ponte (Jacopo Bassano), Venetian School  
 1510-1592



## HISTORY OF NOAH



NOAH BUILDS THE ARK. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH  
BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



"THE DEATH OF CAIN." AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE FROM A  
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRED HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904.







THE EVE OF THE DELUGE. FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY W. A. MANSELL & CO., LONDON, AFTER THE PICTURE IN THE TATE GALLERY

William Bell Scott, British School

1811-1890



## HISTORY OF NOAH



THE FLOOD. FROM AN ENGRAVING IN FINDEN'S BIBLE

P. J. de Louthembourg, R.A., British School

1740-1812



THE DELUGE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY W. E. GRAY

J. M. W. Turner, R.A., British School

1775-1851





THE DELUGE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN OIL-COLOURS, REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY PILOTY & LOEHLE

Carl Schorn, Modern German School



## HISTORY OF NOAH



THE END OF THE DELUGE: NOAH RECEIVING THE DOVE THAT RETURNED. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

Gustave Brion, French School

1824-1877



## HISTORY OF NOAH



THE DOVE THAT RETURNED IN THE EVENING. FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRED HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904



THE DOVE THAT RETURNED NOT AGAIN. FROM A  
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRED HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904



## HISTORY OF NOAH



NOAH'S SACRIFICE AFTER THE DELUGE. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO,  
FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Penni, Giulio Romano, and Giovanni da Udine





NOAH'S SACRIFICE AFTER THE DELUGE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY C. R. H. PICKARD, BY PERMISSION OF THE CORPORATION OF LEEDS

Daniel Maclise, R.A., British School

1811-1870



# HISTORY OF NOAH



NOAH AWAKING FROM HIS SLUMBERS REBUKES HAM. FROM THE ORIGINAL WOODCUT PUBLISHED IN 1860 BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG, IN A SERIES OF 240 BIBLE PICTURES

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



THE TOWER OF BABEL AND THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES. AFTER THE ORIGINAL MURAL PAINTING IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS, PARIS, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLOZ, ÉDITEUR PARIS

Hippolyte Flandrin, French School

1809-1864







# The Patriarchal Age

By the Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A.



VERYBODY may see that through all the marvel of the warp and woof of the historical books of the Old Testament there run three main threads of absorbing interest—the march of events, the evolution of character, and the revelation of God to man. While in each of the three sections into which this volume is divided, we are immediately aware of significant variety, it is the variety of stress and accent rather than of theme.

In the Creation section, the greatness of the events chiefly impresses the mind ; in the Mosaic period, the unveiling of the Divine will dwarfs all other interests, but the Patriarchal Age is notable in the first instance for the characters delineated. The Patriarchs themselves hold our eyes. It is what they are, what they become, what they fail to be, what after much failure they achieve that attract successive generations. The incidents which make up their lives form a narrative full of fascination ; the secret providence of God, His love and the veils which lie upon His love so long are also here disclosed ; but the supreme interest of the larger portion of the book of Genesis centres in the actual characters of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel, seen in the clear air of life's morning, cutting the haze of the intervening centuries with markedly contrasted outlines, standing forth as elemental types of the variations of human nature which the world has since known.

## I.

The earlier chapters of Genesis describe particular incidents with a good deal of detail, but it is only with the story of Abraham that the book begins to give us life-histories proper, tracing the development of a man's soul through successive years and from crisis to crisis. Abraham is one of the few figures of true



## The Old Testament in Art

grandeur in the portrait gallery of the world. "Friend of God" and "Father of the Faithful" do not appear ill-fitting titles for this high soul. Twice his reputation was blemished by the use of futile trickery, yet in his habitual intercourse both with God and with man we are impressed with the noble cast of his energy, patience and faith. A venerable figure throughout so many years, his virility, his power of initiative and vigour of will never failed him. It is Rembrandt who has been singularly successful in interpreting the august distinction of Abraham's character in the picture which represents him entertaining the three angels (page 78). A grandly formed head, massive yet refined; an eye that sees deep and far and yet is serene; an expression of large benevolence destitute of every trace of senile kindliness—all this is heightened by the contrast with the angelic countenances which are smaller, less powerful, and indeed less attractive.

Isaac suffered the penalty which befalls the sons of great fathers. His own energy was dwarfed and his nature stunted by an overshadowing personality. He possessed certain excellences, all his own and not to be despised, for he was meditative and pure, and what his father gained both of earthly heritage and of spiritual tradition he held tenaciously and passed to the succeeding generation. But he was only a far-off imitator of a mighty sire. He dug the same wells as his father and told the same lie. His unused will and untaxed strength decayed at an age when Abraham was in the fulness of his powers. His life dribbled to a close. The painting by a Dutch painter, G. Willemsz Horst (page 93), skilfully suggests these characteristics. There lies the old man, old before his time; estimable, irreproachable, gentle, but untoughened by the toil of lonely decisions, unennobled by the full expenditure of life, a prey to the wiles of those he trusts.

Jacob is to many only the forerunner of the Shylocks and Isaacs of his race, the type immortalized by the greatest dramatist and the best-read novelist of our land. But this is to mistake him. Crafty he was, not scorning the tricks of his trade, ever heedful, never off guard even with a friend. But is this all? Did not this man love, just as he worked and planned, with a



## The Patriarchal Age

perseverance and tenacity most impressive? A plain man, a lover of tents and herds, it was not these, but the birthright, a possession spiritual as much as material, which caught his fancy and fired his desire. It is easy to picture him as a narrow nature, with only sordid aims and creeping ways. That is the mistake of the German artist, Eduard von Gebhardt. The very radiance of the angel in an attitude of parting beneficence accentuates the meanness of the kneeling form of Jacob. The late Mr. G. F. Watts has given us a better interpretation (page 108). In his painting, Jacob has just emerged from the struggle which has transformed him. Lamed and spent he shrinks a little from his stalwart brother's embrace. Limb and soul are bruised. It is a moment when a man's face is a lantern for his whole being. There we see the keen and subtle mind, too often guileful in the past; the heart in which selfishness and self-sacrificing love have been so strangely interlaced; the will strong to pursue high ends, but by low means; and over the whole dawns the light of that self-victory which made him worthy of the name Israel, prince, no longer supplanter.

By the side of these three founders of the Hebrew race, move three women so diverse that they may be said to represent the three main types of womanhood—the queenly, the bright and practical, and the appealing.

Sarah, though ungenerous in some points, was emphatically what her name declared her, the princess. Her commanding beauty and imperious temper rendered her absolute mistress in her own household. There is scarcely a hint of softness or humility in her story, yet how fit a mate for the lonely pioneer in things of the spirit. Unhesitating, she passed with him into the unknown West; unabashed before a new civilization she dazzled the eyes of Pharaoh's court; unafraid, she anticipated motherhood in her old age. It is perhaps easier to imagine her superb nature interpreted in sculpture than in painting. The fact remains that in neither can we find anything at all adequate.

When we first meet Rebekah at the well the leading traits of her character leap to light. Self-reliant, vivacious,



## The Old Testament in Art

adventurous, quick to decide, full of contrivance ; the very wife, one would say, for Isaac, the slow-moving and meditative, yet after all the very wife to nurse his defects. With years her character coarsens, her brightness hardens, her ingenuity becomes deception. There are two illustrations which concentrate attention on the person of Rebekah, but they both fail to represent the subtlety and resolution which characterised so many of her actions. Mr. Hilton's picture gives us a beautiful girl of the early Victorian type, with a sidelong glance at the new comer ; Mr. Goodall shows us a woman awed by a sudden vista of undreamed of possibilities. Both artists do suggest, however, her gravest defect. Rebekah, cold and self-contained in nature, made no appeal to the heart. The only person she herself really loved—her son Jacob—seemed to forget her with conspicuous ease when Rachel dawned on his horizon.

No woman in the early history of their race made such an impression upon the Israelites as Rachel. After long centuries Jeremiah chose her as the type of the broken-hearted nation, and when the blood of the innocents was shed in Bethlehem the Evangelist echoes the cry of " Rachel weeping for her children." The secret of her appeal lay in nothing very distinctive in character, for she was neither subtle nor commanding, and while the Bible, which speaks with such frank simplicity of the fairness of women, tells us that she was " beautiful and well favoured," we feel that this is by no means all her charm. She seems to have been of the very essence of femininity, and held her almost unconscious sway through the emotions. " The seven years seemed but a few days for the love he had for her." There is a whole love-poem in these words. Her long years of childlessness, which moved her at last to peevish complaint, and the helplessness of her sorrow in the parting hour, when for the first time the inevitable breathed chill upon her soul—all went to deepen the appeal of her memory to her husband and to her people.

The Cignaroli's picture of her death (page 109), in its portrayal of over-wrought sorrow, lacks the poignancy of the reserve of Genesis, but in the abandonment of Jacob's grief and





THE MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO, VATICAN, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino) Roman School

Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano







## The Patriarchal Age

in the prostrate figure of the child Joseph he lays the stress where it ought to be. Rachel was born to love and to be loved. This was her one vocation and her death declared it.

The Book of Genesis gives us one other full length portrait and this a very radiant one. Among all the descendants of Abraham, there has perhaps never been a more perfect combination of capacity, goodness and unfailing temper than in Joseph. At first sight he is less distinctive than his ancestors, but this is only because he includes in himself something of each—the faith and initiative of Abraham, the pure and tranquil spirit of Isaac, the supple and ingenious mind of Jacob. His best endowment was the unrivalled proportion and balance of his nature. Three times his fair prospects were blasted by some calamity; each calamity in turn was transformed by his own courage and fine temper into a platform for fresh achievement. Such a man, with the added grace of a handsome person, was bound to rise high in the day of opportunity. It is his crowning honour that he never sought to advance one step by denying his conscience or his God.

Mr. Harry Mileham's rather slight picture of Joseph relating his dreams (page 112) is full of suggestion, despite the somewhat futile representation of Jacob. The focus of the brooding hatred of his brothers' eyes, Joseph stands with something of the arrogance of a favoured child; but in his easy poise and natural grace, one can trace the incipient courtier, the courtier, however, to whose flexibility and practical energy are added unblenching purity and the inestimable gift of vision.

### II.

The stream of Divine Revelation in the days of the Patriarchs flowed in a channel of human romance. The lives by which God was made known were not dull and uneventful, but on the contrary full of emotion and incident. Scene after scene appeals to the artistic consciousness purely because of physical beauty or dramatic value. The artist often does not concern himself with the representation of human character or the illustration of Divine purposes. His sole aim



## The Old Testament in Art

is to reproduce some exquisite aspect of nature or vivid moment of life.

From the former point of view, a number of landscapes in this section must be judged. They are idylls of the tent-door or the well side. Such is Decamps' "Meeting of Eliezer and Rebekah." The human interest is subordinated. It is really a picture of "the largeness of the evening earth" in an Oriental setting. In the representations of Hagar and Ishmael—a subject which seems to possess a peculiar fascination for the modern French School—a deeper note is struck. They vibrate with the tragedy of the desert. Corot's angel, quaintly depicted like a great bird against the blue sky, scarcely relieves the tension of feeling. It is indeed the deep emotional interest of these narratives which is their outstanding quality. In dealing with such subjects the early masters showed great understanding. They thought little of striving for correctness in dress and background, aiming rather at the harmonious presentation of the significant moments of the inner life.

This is conspicuously evidenced in the pictures of the life of Jacob. In Jacopo Palma's "The Meeting with Rachel" (page 100), the landscape is frankly Italian, and the hose and tunic mediæval, but the artist has caught the very spirit of that hour when the schemer first forgot to scheme and love made his hard nature gentle. In such a picture as this we get near the heart of him who has been called the Ulysses of the Old Testament, a traveller all his years and wise in stratagems. The name befits him in a double sense, for it was only after a long and weary Wanderjahr that by the brook Jabbok his soul came home to God.

A number of artists have rightly seized on this as a pivotal moment in his life. Mysteriously detained when about to rejoin his company across the ford, Jacob locked with his unseen adversary and strove with all his wiles and strength to throw him and go free. Neither Salvatore Rosa nor Jacques Patissou (pages 105 and 106) makes a mistake in Biblical interpretation when they depict a struggle purely physical. There was nothing religious in Jacob's mind in the first hours of conflict.



## The Patriarchal Age

Only when in one moment disabled, it dawned on him that but for the forbearance of his strange visitant he had been impotent from the first, was his pride of strength and skill broken. From that hour he was done with trickery ; his self-confidence was swept from him ; he leaned on God.

But through the succeeding years he reaped the bitter harvest of his sins. His retrospect of life is contained in one of the saddest sentences in human speech, "Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage." Artists have used the dramatic hour when Jacob shrinks from the bloody token of his son's death, to depict the autumn melancholy and winter storms of his life. But with unhappy unanimity, they present him as a broken and nerveless figure, and even in Rembrandt's virile hands he is but one remove from a doddering old man. The contrary was the truth. Jacob's spirit grew throughout the years of sorrow, and on his death-bed nobility of character and peace of heart clasped hands. His is the story of a soul's journey with many stumblings, but the end was fair.

### III.

The severest task awaits the artist when he addresses himself to depict the communion of God with man : the moments in which the human strives upwards to the divine or the divine flowers miraculously from the common soil.

Many painters are evidently baffled when they attempt angelic forms. In Corot's picture of the flight from Sodom (page 83) the figures of Lot crushed with the weight of calamity, of his daughters loaded with their hastily gathered treasures, and of his wife already taking on the rigidity of a statue, are all instinct with the conflicting feelings of that awful hour, but his angel too painfully recalls the messenger of the gods in some operatic scene. Murillo's angels in the picture of Jacob's dream (page 99) are radiant with love and childish grace and disarm all criticism, though they are little better than etherealized cupids. There is a strong simplicity in Rembrandt's painting of the angel with folded wings, seated in a boylike attitude in Abraham's tent, but even this master's naïveté

## The Old Testament in Art

touches us less than Browning's single phrase, which after all is only Dante's "l'uccel divino,"

"Thou bird of God."

It is in the supreme moments of Abraham's life, conspicuously in the sacrifice of his son Isaac, that the great masters have found and grasped their highest opportunity. The pictures by Tintoretto, Andrea del Sarto and Rembrandt are all worthy of their subject. Abraham, though standing so high above the men of his time, was still under the iron yoke of some of their degrading superstitions. When he realized that the complete dedication of his son to God was required, he could conceive of obedience in no other fashion than by human sacrifice. He was permitted to prepare for the barbaric deed down to the last detail. When his hand was stayed in the act of raising the sacrificial knife, two great ends had been accomplished. His loyalty to the Divine Will had been proved to the utmost and the religion of his race was for ever cleansed from the belief that Jehovah could demand human sacrifice as the expression of complete surrender to His purpose.

Rembrandt best depicts the agony of the final moment. The face of the victim is covered, the father, distraught with horror, can scarcely yet believe that the deed to which he had steeled his heart need not be accomplished. "The perfect painter" of Florence, here as in all his work, eliminates anything that could revolt or horrify (page 86). Our attention is fixed on the gentle sorrow and self-abnegation of Isaac, a willing sacrifice. The child-angel, whose first word is enough and who does not need to hold back the upraised hand, adds a touch of tenderness to the whole. But it is the unfinished picture by Tintoretto, Ruskin's favourite artist, that reveals the finest feeling (page 87). Abraham's hand rests in a last caress upon the shoulder of his son. His face has aged, the lamps of hope have gone out; and the angel with outspread wing, as coming in a whirlwind of haste to stay the deed, is reproachful as well as mighty.

R. C. GILLIE.



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



ABRAM DRAWS NEAR TO SHECHEM IN THE "LAND OF PROMISE." AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE, BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., LONDON

Johann Wilhelm Schirmer, German School

1807-1863



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



ABRAM DRAWS NEAR TO SHECHEM IN THE PROMISED LAND. FROM AN ORIGINAL WOODCUT PUBLISHED BY GEORG WIGAND  
AT LEIPZIG, IN 1860, IN A SERIES OF 240 BIBLE PICTURES

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



THE MEETING OF MELCHIZEDEK AND ABRAM. AFTER THE PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, PARIS, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY  
BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, Genoese School  
1616-1670



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



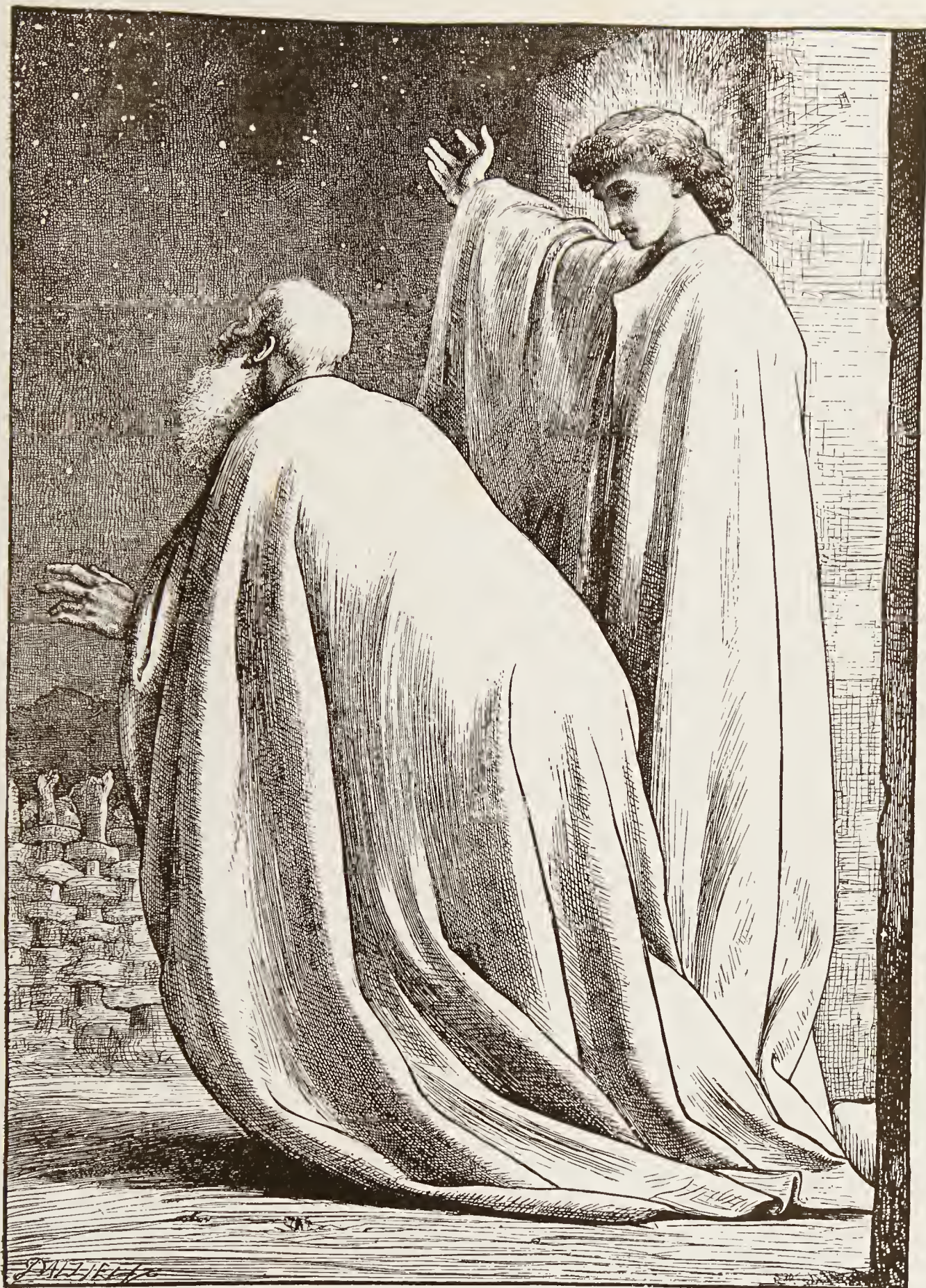
MELCHIZEDEK, A KING OF SALEM AND PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, BLESSES ABRAH. AFTER THE ORIGINAL MURAL PAINTING IN THE CHURCH OF SAINT GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS, PARIS, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLOZ, ÉDITEUR, PARIS

Hippolyte Flandrin, French School

1809-1864



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



ABRAM IS ASSURED THAT HIS SEED SHALL BE NUMEROUS AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN. REPRODUCED AFTER THE PLATE MADE BY MESSRS. GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD. (DALZIEL'S BIBLE GALLERY, 1880)

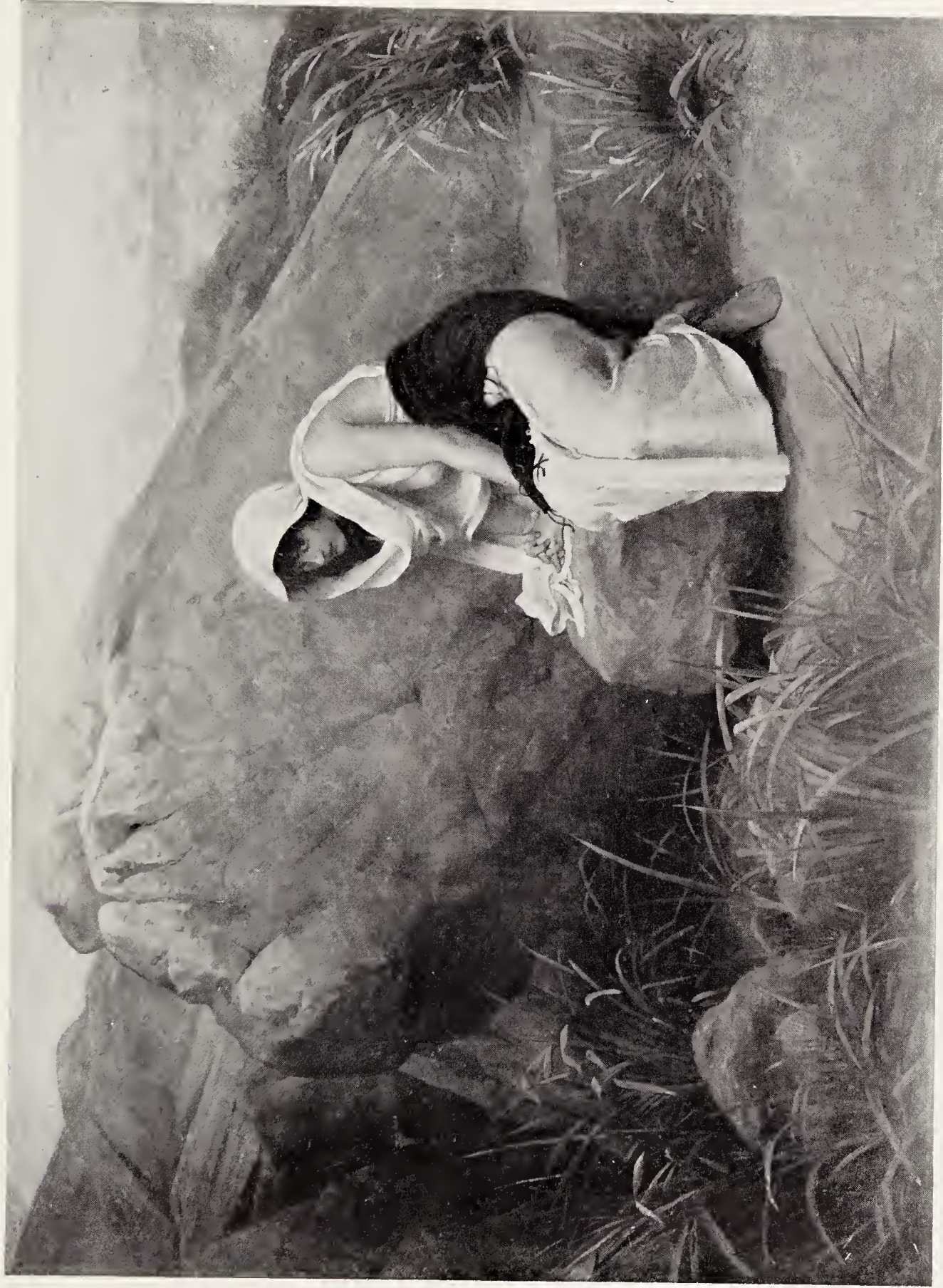
Lord Leighton, P.R.A., Modern British School

1830-1896









HAGAR FINDS REFUGE FROM SARAI IN THE SOUTHERN WILDERNESS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE COLLECTION OF MRS. CALDERON

Philip H. Calderon, R.A., Modern British School  
1833-1898





ABRAHAM ENTERTAINS THREE ANGELS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING AT ST. PETERSBURG, IN THE HERMITAGE GALLERY, FROM  
A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch School

1606-1669





ONE OF THE THREE ANGELS ASSURES ABRAHAM THAT WITHIN THE YEAR A SON WILL BE BORN TO HIM. FROM A WOODCUT  
PUBLISHED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG, IN 1860

Julius Schnorr, German School  
Died in 1872



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



ABRAHAM, ACCOMPANIED BY THE ANGEL OF THE COVENANT, PLEADS WITH THE ALMIGHTY FOR SODOM AND GOMORRAH. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE, BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., LONDON

Johann Wilhelm Schirmer, German School

1807-1863



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



LOT ESCAPES FROM SODOM. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING IN THE ARMAND COLLECTION, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH  
BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Attributed to

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Perhaps by his Pupil, Giulio Romano







## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



LOT AND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTERS LEAVE SODOM. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE COLLECTION OF CHARLES BUTLER, ESQ., FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Peter Paul Rubens, Flemish School

1577-1640



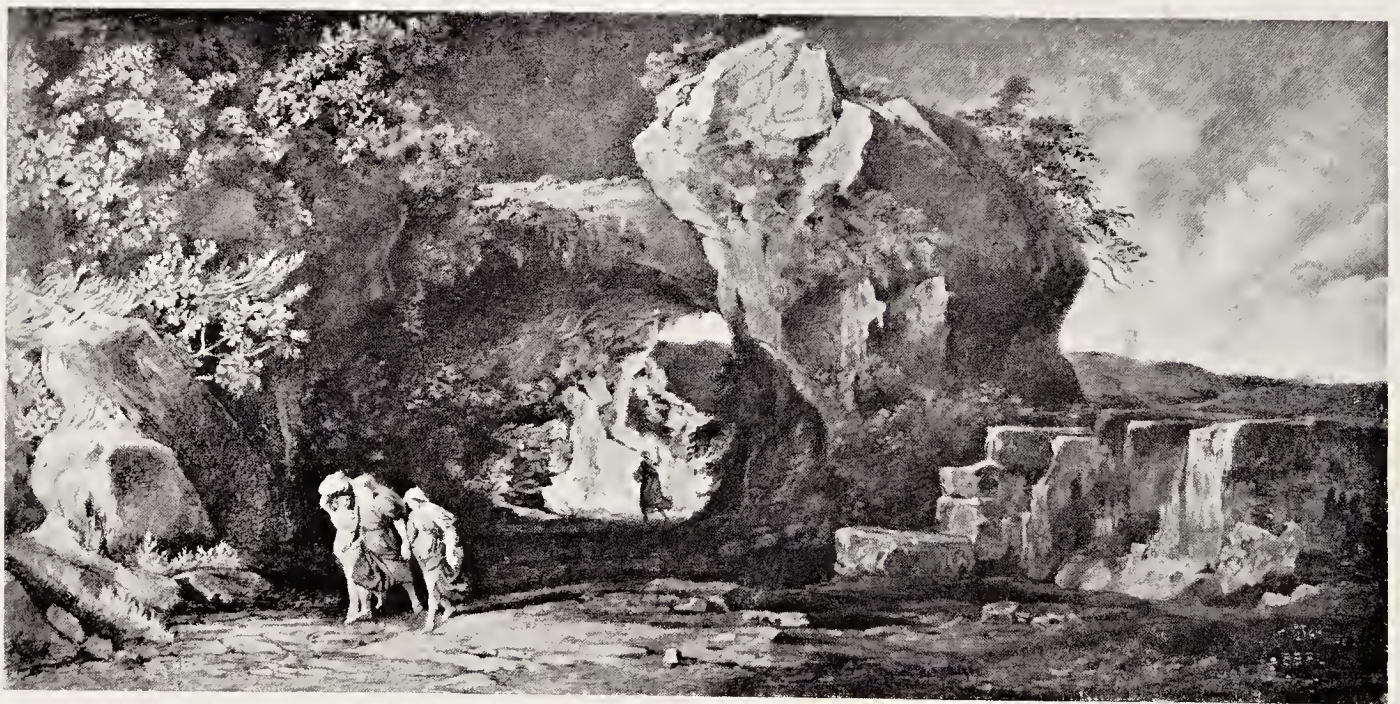
## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON,  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY W. E. GRAY

J. M. W. Turner, R.A., British School

1775-1851



LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS FLY FROM SODOM TOWARDS ZOAR. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE, BY PERMISSION OF  
THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., NEW BOND ST.,  
LONDON

Johann Wilhelm Schirmer, German School

1807-1863





THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DURAND RUEL COLLECTION, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

J. B. C. Corot, French School

1796-1875



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS ENTER THE TOWN OF ZOAR. REPRODUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL PROOF IN MEZZOTINT

John Martin, British School

1789-1854



ABRAHAM DISMISSING HAGAR AND ISHMAEL. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON AFTER THE PAINTING AT MILAN IN THE BRERA GALLERY

G. Francesco Barbieri (il Guercino), Bolognese School

1591-1666



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART.



"HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE WILDERNESS." AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LUXEMBOURG, PARIS, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

The late Jean Charles Cazin, Modern French School.







## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



ISHMAEL. AFTER THE PICTURE IN THE LUXEMBOURG,  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY LÉVY & SONS, PARIS

A. E. Dinet, Modern French School



HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE WILDERNESS

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

Madame Virginie Demont-Breton, Modern French School



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Andrea del Sarto, Florentine School

1486-1531



## HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING IN THE ALBERTINA GALLERY, VIENNA, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Jacopo Robusti (Tintoretto) Venetian School  
1518-1594



ELIEZER MEETS REBEKAH AT A WELL OUTSIDE THE CITY OF HARAN. AFTER THE OIL-PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Nicolas Poussin, French School  
1594-1665





ELIEZER AND REBEKAH. REPRODUCED FROM AN ENGRAVING BY PERMISSION OF THE  
ART UNION OF LONDON, 112, STRAND, LONDON

Frederick Goodall, R.A., Modern British School  
1822-1904



REBEKAH AT THE WELL. AFTER AN ENGRAVING FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY  
W. A. MANSELL & CO., LONDON

William Hilton, R.A., British School  
1786-1839





REBEKAH AND ELIEZER OF DAMASCUS. AFTER THE PAINTING AT CHANTILLY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Alexandre Gabriel Decamps, French School

1803-1860



HISTORY OF ABRAHAM



THE MEETING OF REBEKAH AND ISAAC. FROM AN ORIGINAL WOODCUT PUBLISHED IN 1860 BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG, IN A SERIES OF 240 BIBLE PICTURES

Julius Schnorr, German School  
Died in 1872





THE BURIAL OF ABRAHAM IN THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH. REPRODUCED FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ORIGINAL PICTURE, BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., LONDON

Johann Wilhelm Schirmer, German School

1807-1863





GOD APPEARS TO ISAAC AND WARNS HIM NOT TO JOURNEY INTO EGYPT. FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by  
Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino) Roman School  
Executed chiefly by Giulio Romano





ISAAC BLESSES JACOB, AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE BERLIN GALLERY, REPRODUCED FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Gerrit Willemisz Horst, Dutch School  
XVII Century



## HISTORY OF ISAAC



ISAAC, JACOB AND ESAU. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LIECHTENSTEIN GALLERY, VIENNA, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, Dutch School

1621-1674

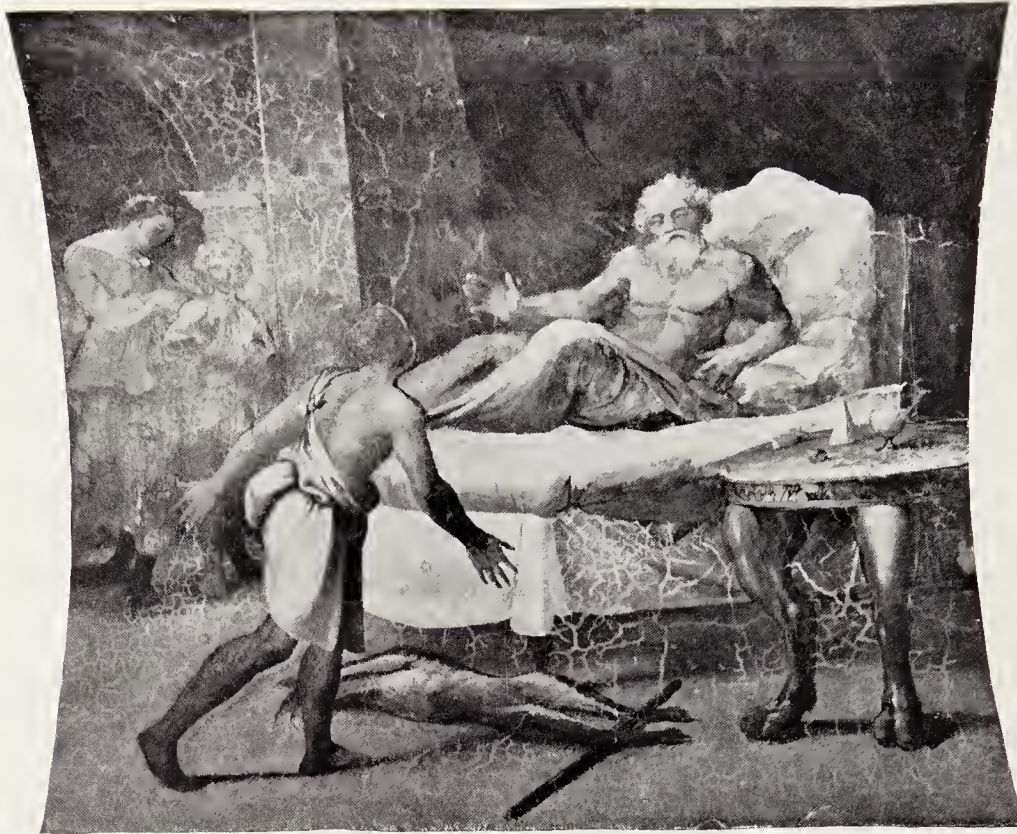




JACOB CRAFTILY OBTAINS HIS FATHER'S BLESSING. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE AT ST. PETERSBURG, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL  
Bartolomé Estéban Murillo, Spanish School  
1618-1682



## HISTORY OF ISAAC



ESAU SEEKS HIS FATHER'S BLESSING AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN FROM  
A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano



THE FLIGHT OF JACOB

FROM AN ORIGINAL WOODCUT

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872



## LIFE OF JACOB



JACOB SEES IN HIS DREAM A LADDER REACHING FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN. AFTER THE PICTURE IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Ferdinand Bol, Dutch School

1616-1680





JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano





JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE AT ST. PETERSBURG, IN THE HERMITAGE GALLERY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Bartolomé Estéban Murillo, Spanish School

1618-1682



## LIFE OF JACOB



RACHEL'S MEETING WITH JACOB. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Jacopo Palma (Palma Vecchio), Venetian School

1480-1528





“THE MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL.”

BY PERMISSION OF H. S. LEON, ESQ.

William Dyce, R.A., British School  
1806-1864









THE MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, NAPLES, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BROGI

Pacecco de Rosa, Neapolitan School  
1600-1654



## LIFE OF JACOB

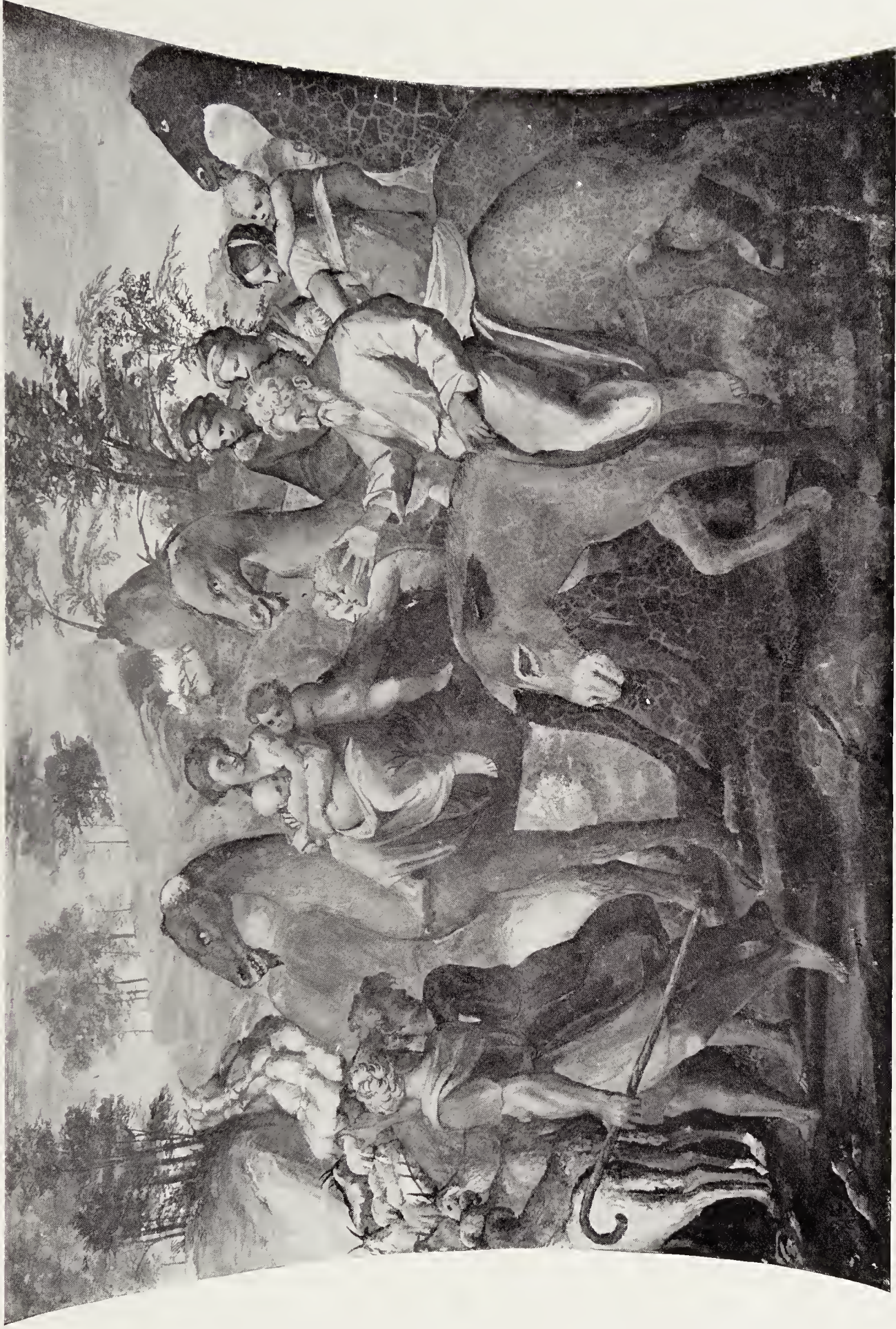


THE ALLIANCE OF JACOB AND LABAN. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE LOUVRE FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Pietro Berrettini, Florentine School

1596-1669





JACOB'S DEPARTURE FROM LABAN. AFTER THE WALL FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Penni, Giulio Romano, and Giovanni da Udine



LIFE OF JACOB



LABAN ACCUSES JACOB OF STEALING HIS HOUSEHOLD GODS, THE TERAPHIM OR IMAGES. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT & CO., PARIS

Bartolomé Estéban Murillo, Spanish School

1618-1682



## LIFE OF JACOB



JACOB WRESTLES WITH THE ANGEL. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE'S COLLECTION, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Salvatore Rosa, Neapolitan School

1615-1673



## LIFE OF JACOB



JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL. AFTER THE PICTURE IN THE BERLIN GALLERY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL

Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch School  
1606-1669



JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH LENT BY THE PAINTER

Jacques Patisson, Modern French School



## LIFE OF JACOB



RECONCILIATION OF JACOB AND ESAU. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE HERMITAGE GALLERY AT ST. PETERSBURG, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Rembrandt van Ryn, Dutch School

1606-1669



## LIFE OF JACOB



THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU, AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH  
BY FRED. HOLLYER, LONDON

G. F. Watts, R.A., Modern British School  
1817-1904



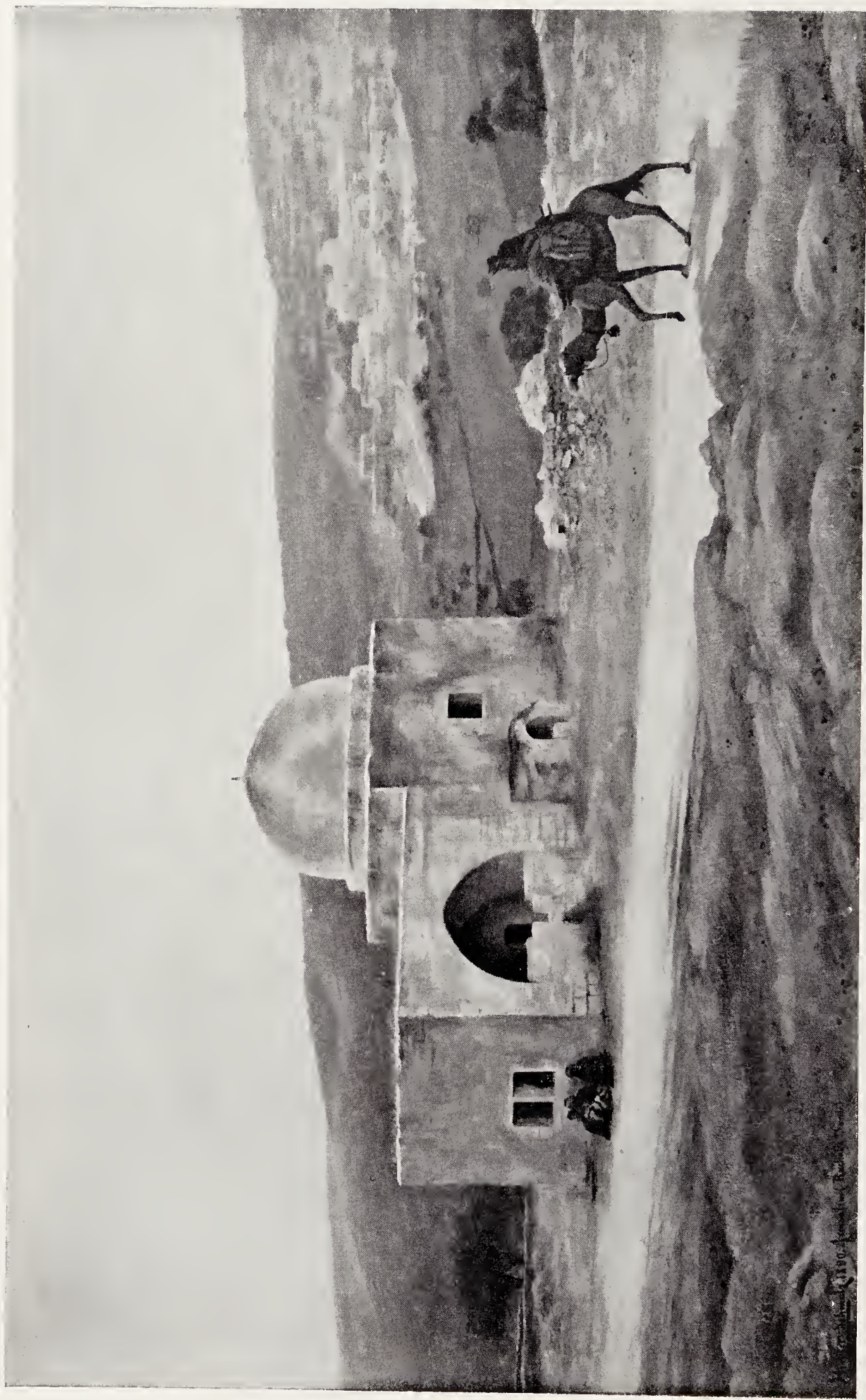


DEATH OF RACHEL. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING AT VENICE, IN THE REGIA ACADEMY, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

G. B. Cignaroli, Venetian School

1706-1770





RACHEL'S TOMB. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY HENRY DIXON & SON, LONDON, BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE PAINTER

Herbert Schmalz, Modern British School





JOSEPH TELLS HIS BRETHREN OF TWO DREAMS WHICH HE HAS DREAMT. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA, DI  
RAFFAELLO, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BROGI

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



JOSEPH RELATES HIS DREAM: "AND HIS FATHER REBUKED HIM AND SAID UNTO HIM, WHAT IS THIS DREAM THAT THOU HAST DREAMED? SHALL I AND THY MOTHER AND THY BRETHREN INDEED COME TO BOW DOWN OURSELVES TO THEE TO THE EARTH"

Harry R. Mileham, Modern British School



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



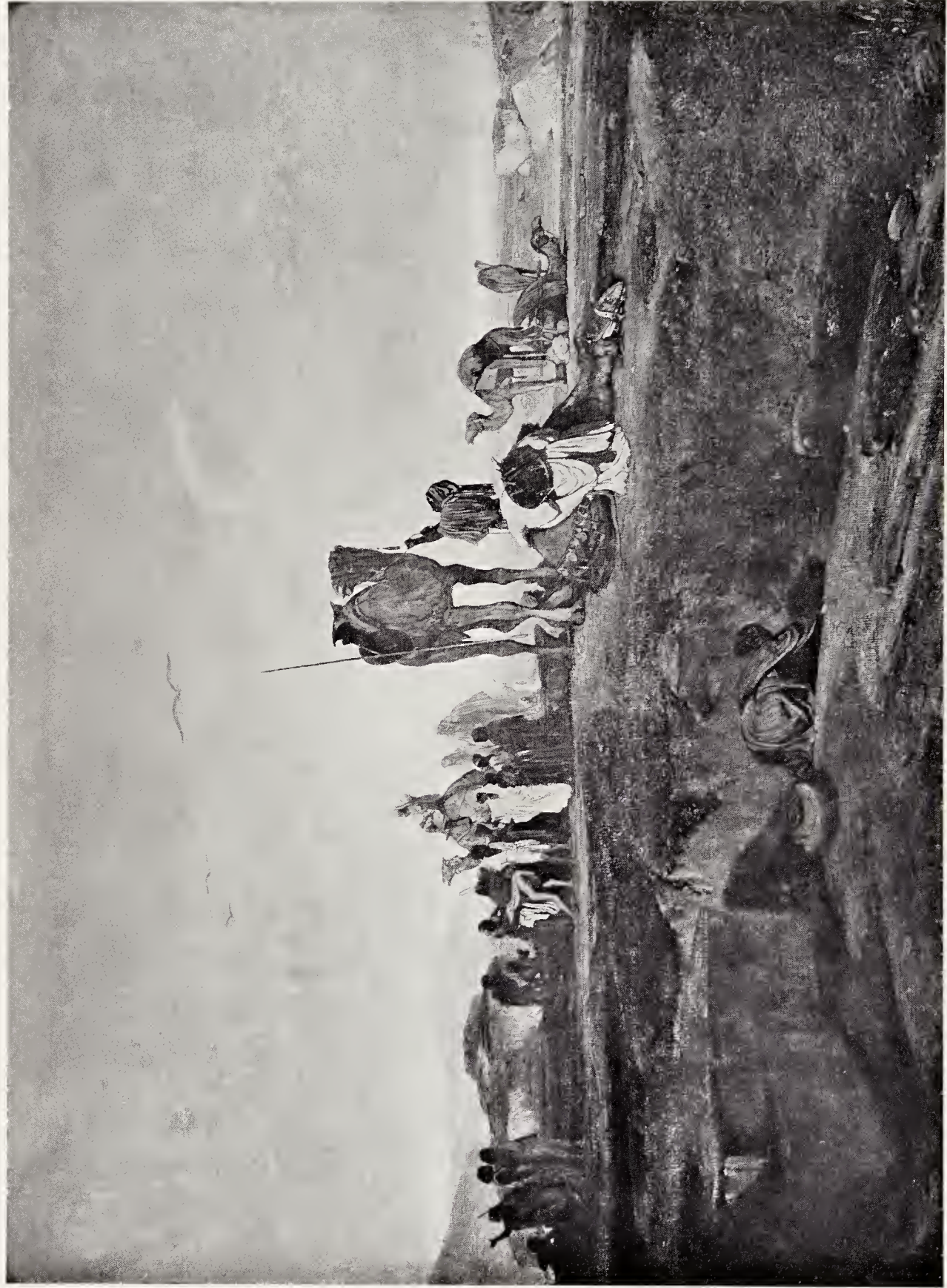
JOSEPH LOWERED INTO THE PIT

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY WILLIAM SAY

James Northcote, R.A., British School

1746-1831





JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHERN TO THE ISHMAELITES

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Alexandre Gabriel Decamps, French School

1803-1860



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



JOSEPH SOLD TO THE ISHMAELITES. AFTER THE ORIGINAL WALL-PAINTING IN THE CHURCH OF SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS, PARIS, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLOZ, éditeur, PARIS

Hippolyte Flandrin, French School

1809-1864



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



JOSEPH'S COAT. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE HERMITAGE GALLERY AT ST. PETERSBURG, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Rembrandt van Rijn, Dutch School

1606-1669



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



“THE COAT OF MANY COLOURS.” REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE WALKER ART GALLERY, LIVERPOOL, BY PERMISSION OF THE ARTS COMMITTEE

Ford Madox Brown, British School  
1821-1893







## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



THE BRETHREN BRING THE COAT OF MANY COLOURS TO JACOB. REPRODUCED FROM A PROOF  
IN MEZZOTINT BY J. YOUNG

Thomas Stothard, R.A., British School  
1765-1834



THE COAT OF MANY COLOURS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL CARTOON, BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN  
PHOTOGRAPHIC CO.

Alfred Rethel, German School  
1816-1859





JOSEPH IN EGYPT CAST INTO PRISON. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Jacopo Carrucci, Florentine School  
1494-1557





JOSEPH IN PRISON INTERPRETS DREAMS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY LÉVY & SONS, PARIS

Attributed to Bernardo Strozzi, Genoese School  
1581-1644



HISTORY OF JOSEPH



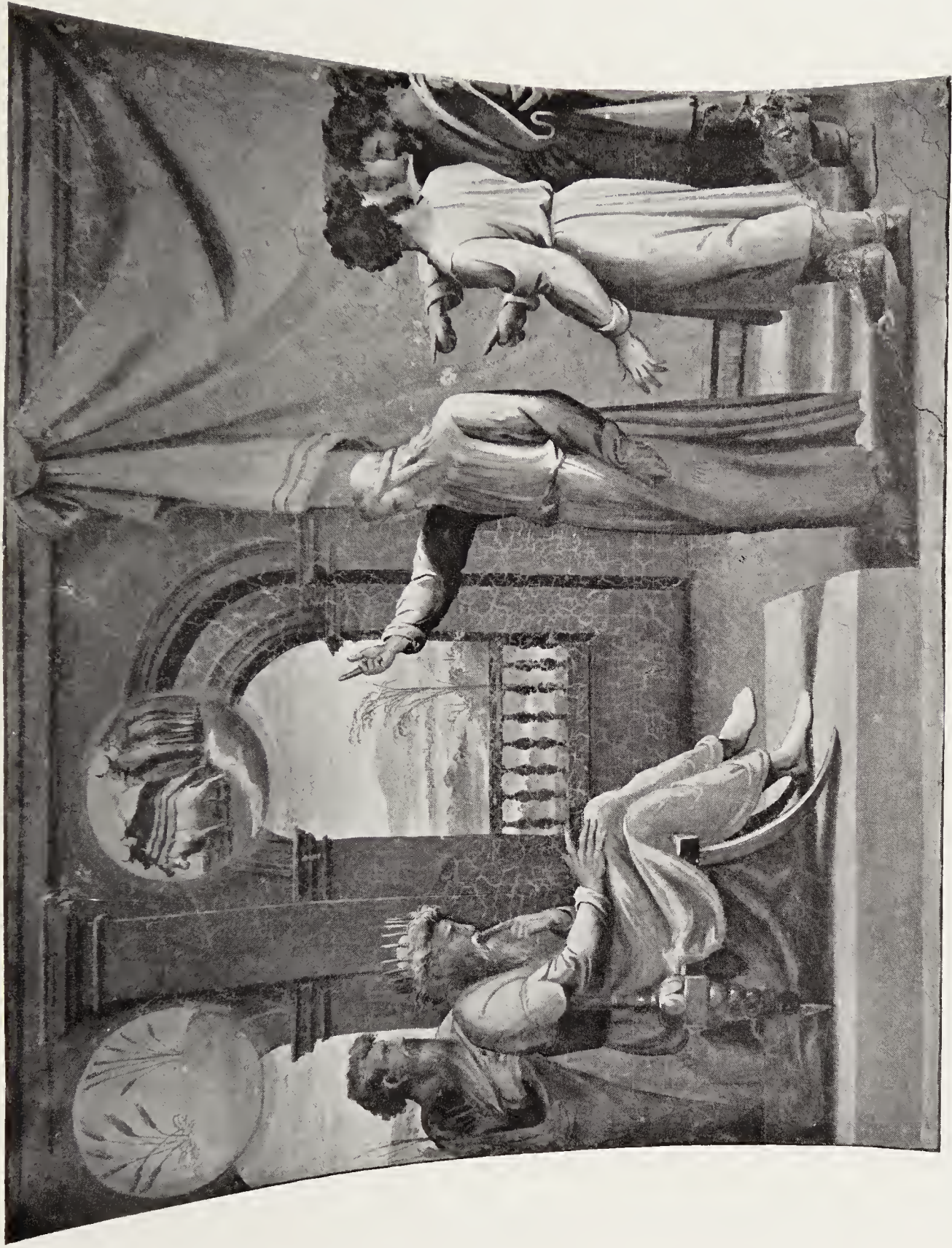
JOSEPH IN PRISON INTERPRETS DREAMS

FROM A PROOF IN MEZZOTINT BY J. YOUNG

Thomas Stothard, R.A., British School

1765-1834





JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



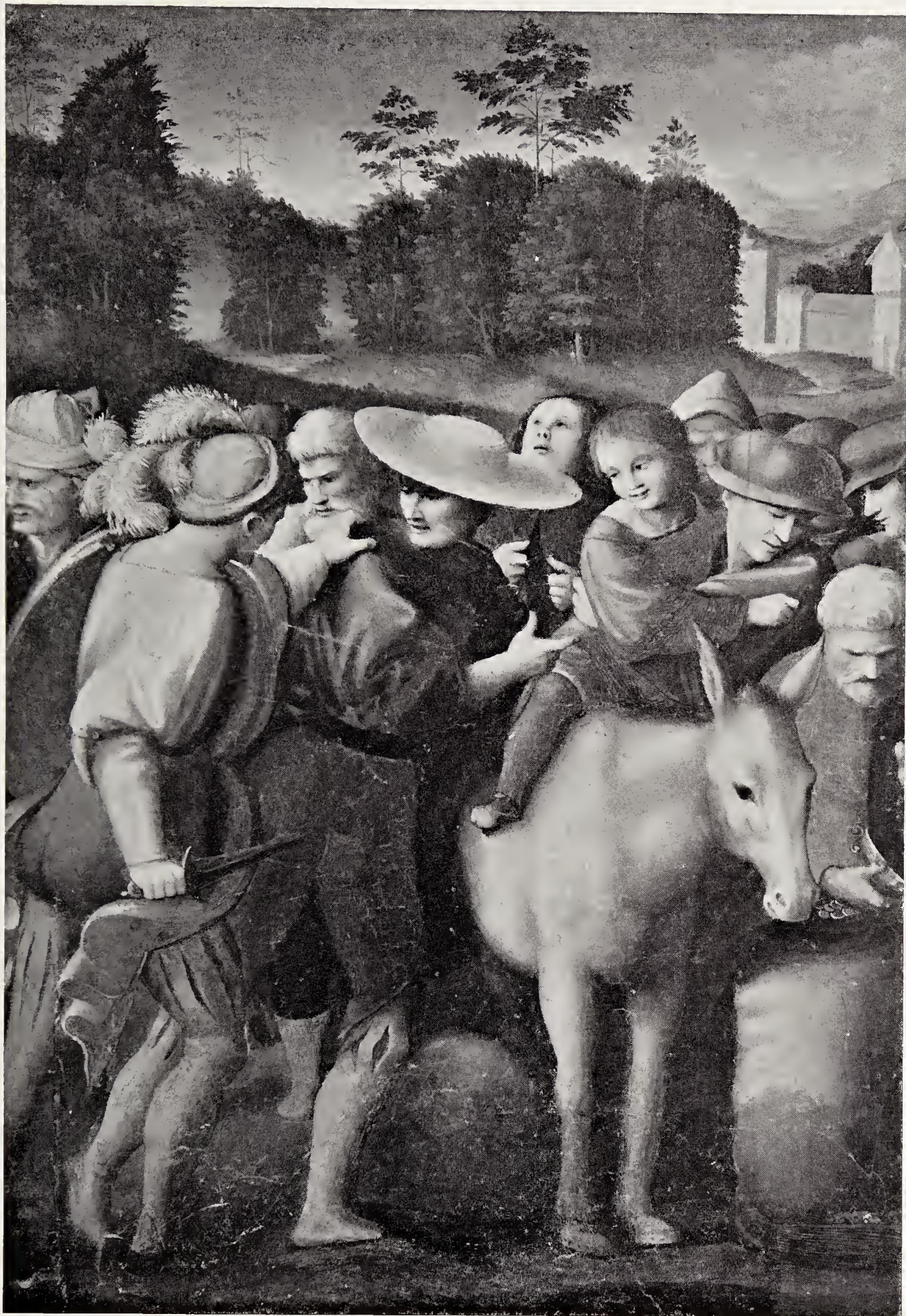
JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS

REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PAINTER

Harold Speed, Modern British School



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



THE CUP FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING IN THE BORGHESE GALLERY, ROME,  
FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON

Francesco Ubertini Bacchiacca, Florentine School

1490(?) - 1557





THE CUP FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS. AFTER THE PICTURE  
IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY

Jan Victoor (or Fictoor), Dutch School

1629-1673



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



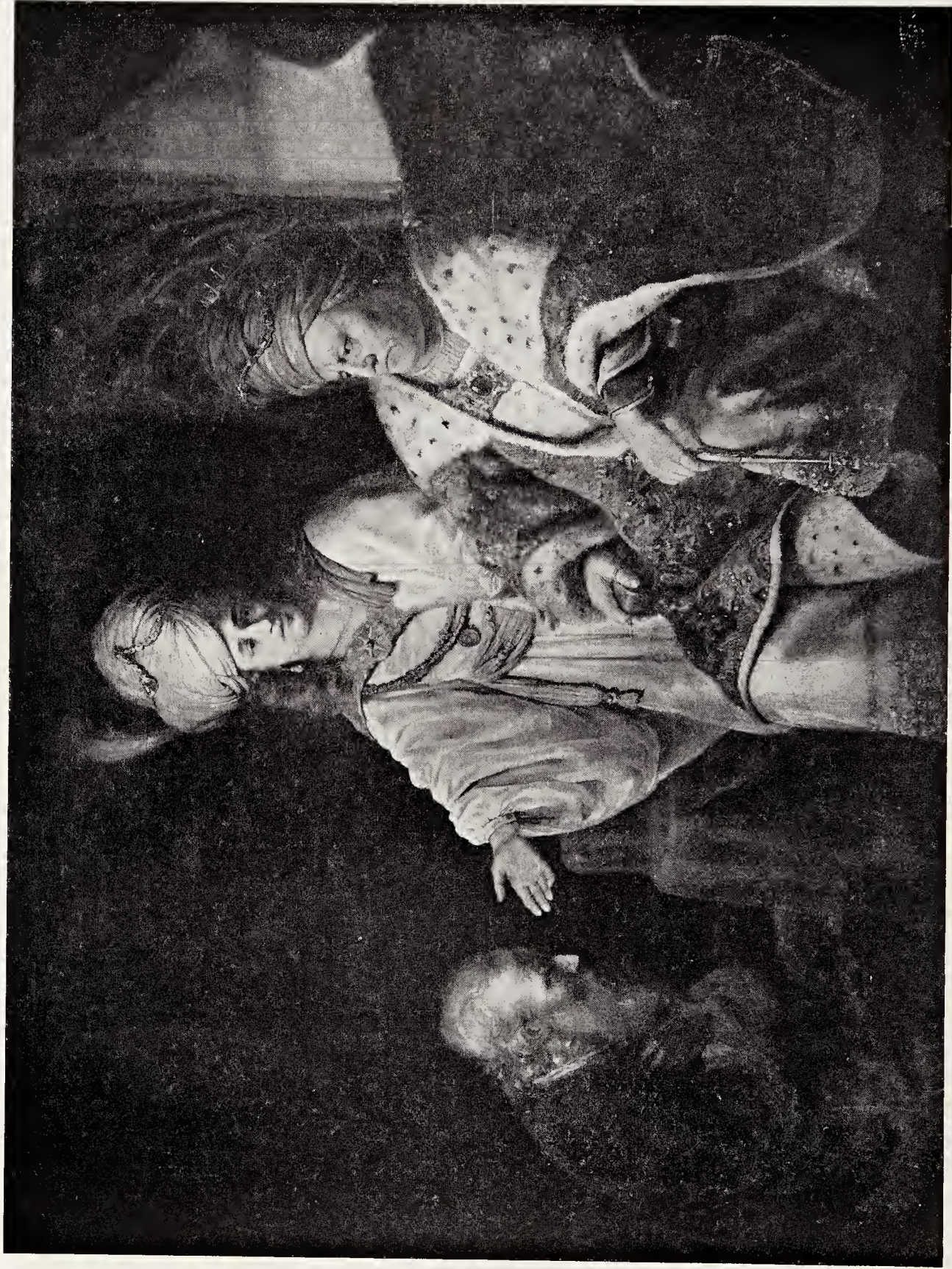
JACOB HEARS THE VOICE OF THE LORD, AND RECEIVES THE DIVINE SANCTION FOR HIS JOURNEY INTO EGYPT  
 REPRODUCED AFTER THE PLATE MADE BY MESSRS. GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.,  
 (DALZIEL'S BIBLE GALLERY, 1880)

Frederick Sandys, Modern British School

1832-1904



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



JOSEPH INTRODUCING JACOB TO PHARAOH. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH  
BY FRANZ HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Ferdinand Bol. Dutch School

1616-1688





JOSEPH INTRODUCING JACOB TO PHARAOH. REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL OIL PICTURE BY KIND PERMISSION OF MRS ELEANOR COLTART

Sir E. J. Poynter, Bart., P.R.A., Modern British School



## HISTORY OF JOSEPH



JACOB BLESSING EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH, THE SONS OF JOSEPH. REPRODUCED AFTER THE PLATE MADE BY MESSRS. GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD. (DALZIEL'S BIBLE GALLERY, 1880)

Frederick Richard Pickersgill, R.A., British School

1820-1900



# The Mosaic Era

By the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A.



It may be sure that the greatest formative personal force in Old Testament history is to be found in the character of Moses. His personality is the one on which the imagination of poet and prophet has most loved to dwell, and around his name have been woven stories of rarest beauty and lasting worth. Hence the Mosaic Era has furnished the artist with some of his most effective subjects throughout all Christian history. The influences which have made the New Testament a fruitful field for the expression of artistic genius have done the same for Moses and the early history of Israel.

The Bible story of the life and work of Moses abounds with subjects full of inspiration for a painter. First, there is the wretched lot of an enslaved people, with its consuming misery and hopeless outlook. Then comes the imperial edict, the massacre of the male children, the almost miraculous preservation of the deliverer that was to be. The winsome story of Miriam's devotion, so effectively related, has been retold on canvas almost ever since Christian art began. Later comes the heroic refusal of the court-bred youth to separate from his own people, grievous as was their condition; his flight and long sojourn in Midian; his vision of God in the desert and his return to Egypt, thence to lead the Children of Israel from their captivity and to guide them in their long and weary wanderings until they reached the borders of the Land of Promise. The means by which this deliverance is effected supplies important and suggestive themes. There is the dramatic appearance of the deliverer before Pharaoh and his summons to him in the name of the God of Israel; the various plagues culminating in the tragedy of the death of the firstborn; the spoiling of the Egyptians in the



## The Old Testament in Art

hurried exodus that followed ; the destruction of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. Another group, fertile in suggestion, is concerned with the various episodes which accompany the march of the migrating host in its journey across the wilderness.

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,  
Out of the land of bondage came,  
Her father's God before her moved,  
An awful guide in smoke and flame.  
By day, along the astonish'd lands,  
The cloudy pillar glided slow ;  
By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands  
Return'd the fiery column's glow.

These lines of Sir Walter Scott are a poetic summary of a narrative abounding in incidents at once picturesque, terrible and sublime. Whether we accept their historicity or not, we cannot but admit that they are a striking series and worthy of the homage that Christian art has paid to them. Considered even as allegory, how suggestive is the story of the halt at the waters of Marah, the miraculous draught from the rock at Horeb, the finding of the manna in the desert ! How pitiful the weakness and the waywardness of the slave-hearted people ! How magnificent the courage and the unselfishness of their leader ! More than once his magnanimity is shown under circumstances that can hardly have been a mere literary invention. On one occasion he intercedes for the life of his jealous brother and sister who were plotting his deposition, perhaps his destruction. Anon he prays for his people, entreating that God will be merciful to them and guide them safely to the end or blot him out also of the book of remembrance. " Art thou jealous for my sake ? " he inquires on another occasion, when it was reported to him that some were prophesying without waiting for his authority—" Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them."

The religious training and the frequent idolatry of the people have been a constant source of illustration of a homiletical kind during all the Christian centuries, from the Fathers



## The Mosaic Era

of the church to the pulpit of to-day. The giving of the law at Sinai, and the ritual of the tabernacle, have been fertile in suggestion. No less so have been the punishments with which their defections were visited. The fiery serpents, the wholesale slaughter after the worship of the golden calf; the breaking of the tables of stone; and the dread mysteries of the Sinaitic theophany, these form a group by themselves. The lonely death on Pisgah ends one epoch and opens another. It is a theme full of memorable power, morally so fitting, so full of true pathos, and withal so sublime. It is not to be wondered at that the devout imagination has loved to linger over these scenes and events as told in Old Testament story. From the point of view of the artist it matters very little whether they are to be taken as literal history or not. They stand for great ideas, broad as humanity and deep as its yearning after God. The historical character of Moses is to the painter and the sculptor a symbol for the heroic in humanity, and it is not necessary that artistic genius should conform to the standards of religious or historic accuracy. With the philosopher and theologian it is otherwise. The historicity of the sources of the narrative has an importance all its own. Without it they find it impossible to explain the ethical impulse which is so conspicuous in the religious history of Israel. The name Moses is also the symbol of a colossal fact, namely, the deliverance of the clans of Israel from Egyptian bondage and their united recognition of Yahweh as the national deity, from which recognition sprang the later ethical monotheism which is Israel's great contribution to the world.

Modern scholarship employs a method which is being applied with increasing success to the folk-lore of all the races which have played any great part in the history of mankind. Granted the imaginary character of the legends that surround the names of the national heroes, it yet remains probable that there must have been a man to make the legend possible. King Olaf, Olgar Danske, Alfred the Great, Robin Hood, Wallace, William Tell, Frederick Barbarossa, are all names with which legend has had as much to do as sober historical fact. Nevertheless



## The Old Testament in Art

the true historian discerns underneath the accumulated mass of fable a forceful original personage who has impressed himself upon the imagination of his contemporaries and made the legend possible. To describe a series of events as mythical is not necessarily to stamp them untrue. There is always a tendency for a mythology to grow up around the memory of any outstanding man, but that mythology is only the language in which men express their wonderment at his actual achievements.

This is so even to-day ; how much more must it have been so in the childhood of the race, when all the forces of nature were personified and all its phenomena regarded as disparate. But this is precisely the region in which Art becomes the interpreter of the soul. What the man of antiquity could not say except with the help of myth and legend, art now says for us in another kind of language. The basal reality of life is personality. No man, however great, is to be measured precisely by his actual achievements. The world feels this concerning all genius ; hence its legends, its poetry, its religion, its art. "The painter," said Ruskin, "is a commentator upon infinity." So he is, and therefore his simplest subject is symbolic, and is an attempt to relate life as we know it to life in the realm of the ideal. Here then is the reason why art has loved to dwell upon the many-hued incidents of the life of Moses. In the man Moses we have the conception of a great character, a colossal individuality, a moral dynamic. Behind all that the world has sung and written of him, there must have been the living, breathing man. All that painters have ever expressed of the wonder, the mystery, the moral greatness of his career must have been more than equalled by the facts. There may or may not have been a passage of the Red Sea, a smiting of the rock at Horeb, or the lonely death on Pisgah, but *more* there must have been. There is, of course, a sense in which every great man raises the moral and intellectual level of the race to which he belongs. Art is the symbolism by means of which the world records its consciousness of the value of this great fact. Art is the language which utters the potentialities of the soul. There is



## The Mosaic Era

a spiritual equivalent for every earthly incident, a value in every achievement which perpetuates it and renders it the act of the whole race. It was said of Napoleon that his mere presence on the field of battle was equivalent to a reinforcement of forty thousand men, because of the enhanced value his presence gave to every individual soldier. One such man as Moses could give to a horde of slaves a value and a sense of solidarity it had never possessed before, and in so doing place that value to the credit of all humanity. Thus the vision of a lonely man in the desert becomes symbolic and expressive of humanity's discovery of its immediate relationship to God, the Soul of all things. The passage of the Red Sea becomes a moral achievement declaratory of the divine boldness with which the soul arrives at freedom, a freedom which is one with the service of God. The waters of Marah are typical of the draught of pain which all men must drink until it is sweetened by the gift of the divine life. The manna is that mystic food on which the children of the highest are sustained, the true bread which came down from heaven, that satisfaction of the soul of which nothing can ever rob the true and brave adherent of righteousness. Every great artist who has ever undertaken to interpret to his age the pilgrimage of Israel and the self-oblation of Moses has felt something of these things, and his work has become a message to the world, a language more eloquent than that of the tongue, to utter that which the soul can live but cannot speak.

There is a way of viewing Old Testament miracles and stories which is in closer keeping with the spirit of true art than is either unimaginative literalism or unimaginative criticism. It is to see right to the heart of the experience set forth in the story, without either accepting it rigidly and uncritically or dismissing it as a tissue of absurdities. Take for example the incident of the vision of God in the burning bush. Has any man with the soul of an artist ever failed of this vision when Nature wrapt his soul in solitude and revealed to him her sacred mysteries? Did the Midianitish shepherd see nothing in the desert scrub in the midst of which he fed his flocks? Could so great a soul as



## The Old Testament in Art

that of Moses remain unaffected by the silent splendours of a scene awful in its magnificence? Picture this scholar and gentleman, this man of burning race-patriotism, this hero of the magnanimous heart and ready brain, this exile from home and kindred, as he sits and reflects before the descending rays of the setting sun in the sublime stillness of eventide in the desert. Enter into his thought about God, the mystery of life, the burden of evil, the cry of suffering Israel. Observe how nature answers to his mood, how the bush for miles around him suddenly flames blood-red before the descending shades of night—for it ought to be noted that it is not one bush but the whole of the desert scrub that displays the indescribable radiance—and you have Moses' discovery of the presence of God, and at the same time the kindling in his soul of the sense of his own vocation. It is to be his to lead forth this enslaved people to national existence, and to the pure and simple worship of the Holy God of whose existence he is now as absolutely convinced as that he himself is alive. What Moses saw at Horeb any man with depth of soul and capable of high resolve may see in like circumstances. Thus Wordsworth—

“I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.”

If “sacred art is the evangelist of the senses,” as Henry Ward Beecher said, the message of the Mosaic Era is second to none in moral suggestiveness and power of appeal. That it has been recognised as such the following pages abundantly prove.

What art as the interpreter of the soul owes to the moral impulse communicated by Christianity it would be difficult



## The Mosaic Era

to say. Certain it is that there is some ratio between moral depth and the products of artistic genius. As types of sensuous beauty the achievements of Greek sculpture have never been surpassed, but there is something wanting in the Greek marbles. That something may be the indescribable quality the absence of which, as a modern writer has said, makes even Plato seem morally superficial when compared with St. Paul. Of ancient painting we are unable to judge, for so far as we know no authentic specimen of ancient oil-painting exists, and Christendom allowed many centuries to pass ere its sacred painting became worthy to rank with ancient Greek sculpture. Painting existed, it is true, in the Byzantine empire, but in a crude and low condition. The association of art with pagan subjects led by reaction to the long suppression of the efforts of artistic genius. Whatever wealth of pictures existed in the eastern districts of the Roman empire was destroyed by the Mahometan invaders. It is with the Renaissance that sacred painting really springs into being, and to this period belong many of the masterpieces dealing with Old Testament subjects. Such are Pintoricchio's masterpiece in the Sixtine Chapel, and Botticelli's Journey of Moses, also in the Sixtine Chapel. On the same walls is Botticelli's vigorous picture of the destruction of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, which gives a different and superior conception of the great Lawgiver in one of the terrible moments of his career. With Michelangelo and Raphael this period ends and another opens. Michelangelo's statue of Moses will ever rank as the greatest ideal representation of its subject, although it has been suggested that Millais' wonderful work, "Victory, O Lord," surpasses it, alike in dignity and depth of feeling (page 172).

The rescue of the child Moses has ever been a favourite theme, and in every century from the fifteenth downward has been treated by the masters, Modern Art has made notable contributions to the representation of the Mosaic Era. Amongst these, Holman Hunt's pathetic picture, "The Scapegoat," has received perhaps the greatest amount of attention from his countrymen; but to the modern British school also belong two



## The Old Testament in Art

great pictures, "The Death of Pharaoh's Firstborn," by Ernest Normand (page 155), and "The Passage of the Red Sea," by Albert Goodwin (page 163). The latter is in striking contrast to the treatment of the same subject by C. W. Eckersberg, an artist of the Danish School (page 162).

In this book many pictures have been selected from the vast range of works in which this fascinating period of Old Testament history finds artistic expression ; and to study them carefully will prove both an inspiration and a delight.

R. J. CAMPBELL.





MOSES RESCUED FROM THE NILE. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO IN THE VATICAN FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino) Roman School  
Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano



CHILDHOOD OF MOSES



THE FINDING OF MOSES. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Paolo Caliarì (Paolo Veronese), Venetian School

1528-1588



## CHILDHOOD OF MOSES



MOSES RESCUED FROM THE NILE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Pietro Berrettini, Florentine School

1596-1669



CHILDHOOD OF MOSES



THE INFANT MOSES BROUGHT TO PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Pieter de Grebber, Dutch School

1600-1665





"MOSES AND PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER." AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE PRADO AT MADRID, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Paolo Caliari (Paolo Veronese), Venetian School  
1528-1588







## CHILDHOOD OF MOSES



MOSES RESCUED FROM THE NILE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Charles de La Fosse, French School

1636-1716



## CHILDHOOD OF MOSES



THE FINDING OF MOSES. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE AT VIENNA IN THE LIECHTENSTEIN GALLERY,  
FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY HANFSTAENGL, LONDON

Marco Antonio Franceschini, Bolognese School

1648-1729



## CHILDHOOD OF MOSES



MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES, AFTER AN ENGRAVING OF THE ORIGINAL PICTURE, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF W. A. MANSELL, & CO., LONDON

Paul Delaroche, French School

1797-1856



## MOSES IN EGYPT



MOSES, BEHOLDING ONE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN FLOGGED IN THE BRICK-FIELDS, PREPARES TO SLAY THE EGYPTIAN TASKMASTER. REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872





MOSES AND THE DAUGHTERS OF JETHRO. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, SHOWING THE CENTRAL PART OF THE FAMOUS FRESCO  
AT ROME IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL, WHEREIN THE PAINTER HAS REPRESENTED SEVEN SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF MOSES

Sandro Botticelli, Florentine School

1446-1510







## MOSES IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN



ZIPPORAH, THE WIFE OF MOSES, AND HER TWO SONS, GERSHOM AND ELIEZER. REPRESENTING ONE PORTION OF THE FAMOUS FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL OF "THE JOURNEY OF MOSES."  
REPRODUCED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Bernardino Betto (il Pintoricchio), Umbrian School

1454-1513



## IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN



HEAD OF MOSES. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL IN WHICH THE PAINTER HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER SEVEN SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF MOSES. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Sandro Botticelli, Florentine School

1446-1510



## IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN



HEAD OF AARON. FROM THE FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL IN WHICH SEVEN SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF MOSES ARE REPRESENTED. AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Sandro Botticelli, Florentine School

1446-1510



## THE CALLING OF MOSES



MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM  
A PHOTOGRAPH BY LEVY & SONS, PARIS

Francisco Collantes, Spanish School

1599-1656



MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

FROM AN ORIGINAL MEZZOTINT

John Martin, British School

1789-1854





MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH. AFTER THE ORIGINAL WALL PAINTING IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS, FROM A  
COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLOZ, éditeur, PARIS

Hippolyte Flandrin, French School

1809-1864





AARON THROWS DOWN HIS ROD BEFORE PHARAOH AND HIS COURTIERS, AND STRAIGHTWAY IT BECOMES A SERPENT. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Nicolas Poussin, French School

I594-1665



SIGNS AND WONDERS IN EGYPT



MOSES INFORMS PHARAOH OF THE WILL OF JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF ISRAEL. REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School  
died in 1872



## THE PLAGUES



THE SEVENTH PLAGUE—THE STORM OF THUNDER, LIGHTNING, AND HAIL. AFTER A PROOF IN LIBER STUDIORUM, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY  
THE AUTOTYPE CO., NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON

J. M. W. Turner, R.A., British School



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



“AND THERE WAS A GREAT CRY IN EGYPT.”

REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE PAINTER.

Arthur Hacker, A.R.A., Modern British School







## THE PLAGUES



DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY  
ANDERSON, ROME

Bernardino Luini, Milanese School

1475 (?) - after 1533



THE LAST PLAGUE: THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN. AFTER A PROOF IN LIBER STUDIORUM FROM A  
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTOTYPE CO, NEW OXFORD ST., LONDON

J. M. W. Turner, R.A., British School

1775-1851



## THE PLAGUES



DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN. REPRODUCED AFTER THE PLATE MADE BY MESSRS GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.  
(DALZIEL'S BIBLE GALLERY, 1880)

Lord Leighton, P.R.A., Modern British School

1830-1896





THE DEATH OF PHARAOH'S FIRSTBORN

REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE PAINTER

Ernest Normand, Modern British School



## THE FLIGHT —



PHARAOH OVERWHELMED IN THE RED SEA. AFTER A PART OF THE WALL FRESCO IN THE SIXTINE CHAPEL, ROME, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON

Piero di Cosimo, Florentine School



## THE FLIGHT



THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA. AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BROGI

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Perino del Vaga



## THE FLIGHT



MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES AFTER THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLEMENT & CO., PARIS, AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING AT VIENNA IN THE ALBERTINA GALLERY

Nicolas Poussin, French School



## THE FLIGHT



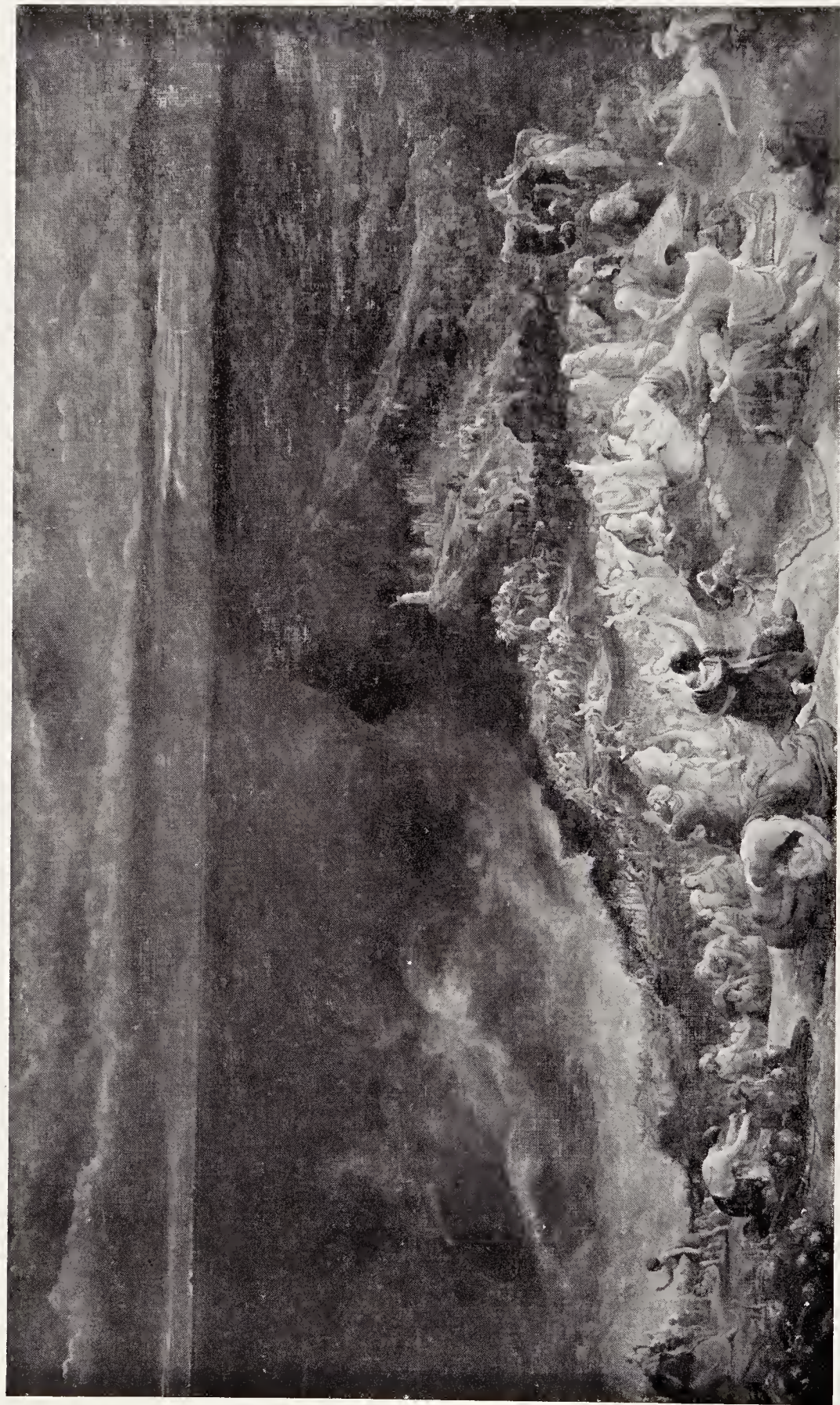
THE DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH'S HOST IN THE RED SEA. AFTER AN ENGRAVING BY T. MILTON IN  
FINDEN'S BIBLE

P. J. de Loutherbourg, British School

1740-1812



## THE FLIGHT



PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS OVERWHELMED IN THE RED SEA. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND'S COLLECTION

Francis Danby, A.R.A., British School

1793 (?) - 1861



## THE FLIGHT



THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA. AFTER THE MURAL PAINTING AT PARIS, IN THE CHURCH OF SAINT GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS,  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLOZ, éditeur, PARIS

Hippolyte Flandrin, French School

1809-1864



# THE FLIGHT



MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES AFTER THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA. FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH KINDLY LENT BY GEORG BROCHNER, COPENHAGEN

C. W. Eckersberg, Danish School





THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA

BY PERMISSION OF THE PAINTER

Albert Goodwin, R.W.S., Modern British School



## THE FLIGHT



THE ISRAELITES OFFER THEIR THANKSGIVING AFTER THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS, AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER'S COLLECTION

Nicolas Poussin, French School

1594-1665



## THE FLIGHT



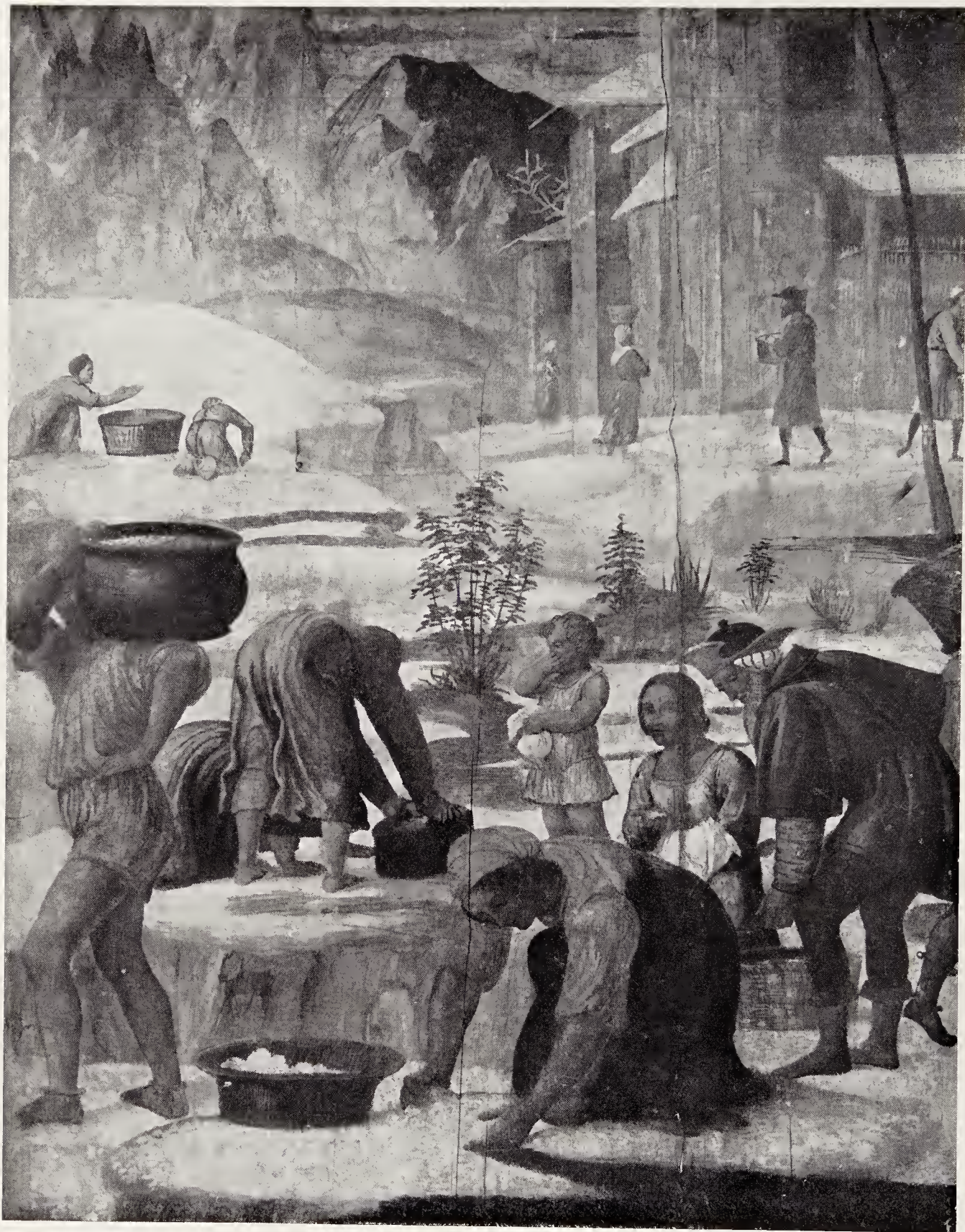
MIRIAM'S SONG OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

REPRODUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL DRAWING

Jennie Wylie, Modern British School



## THE JOURNEY TO REPHIDIM



MANNA IN THE DESERT OF SIN. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY MONTABONE AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING  
AT MILAN

Bernardino Luini, Milanese School

1475 (?) - after 1533



## JOURNEY OF REPHIDIM

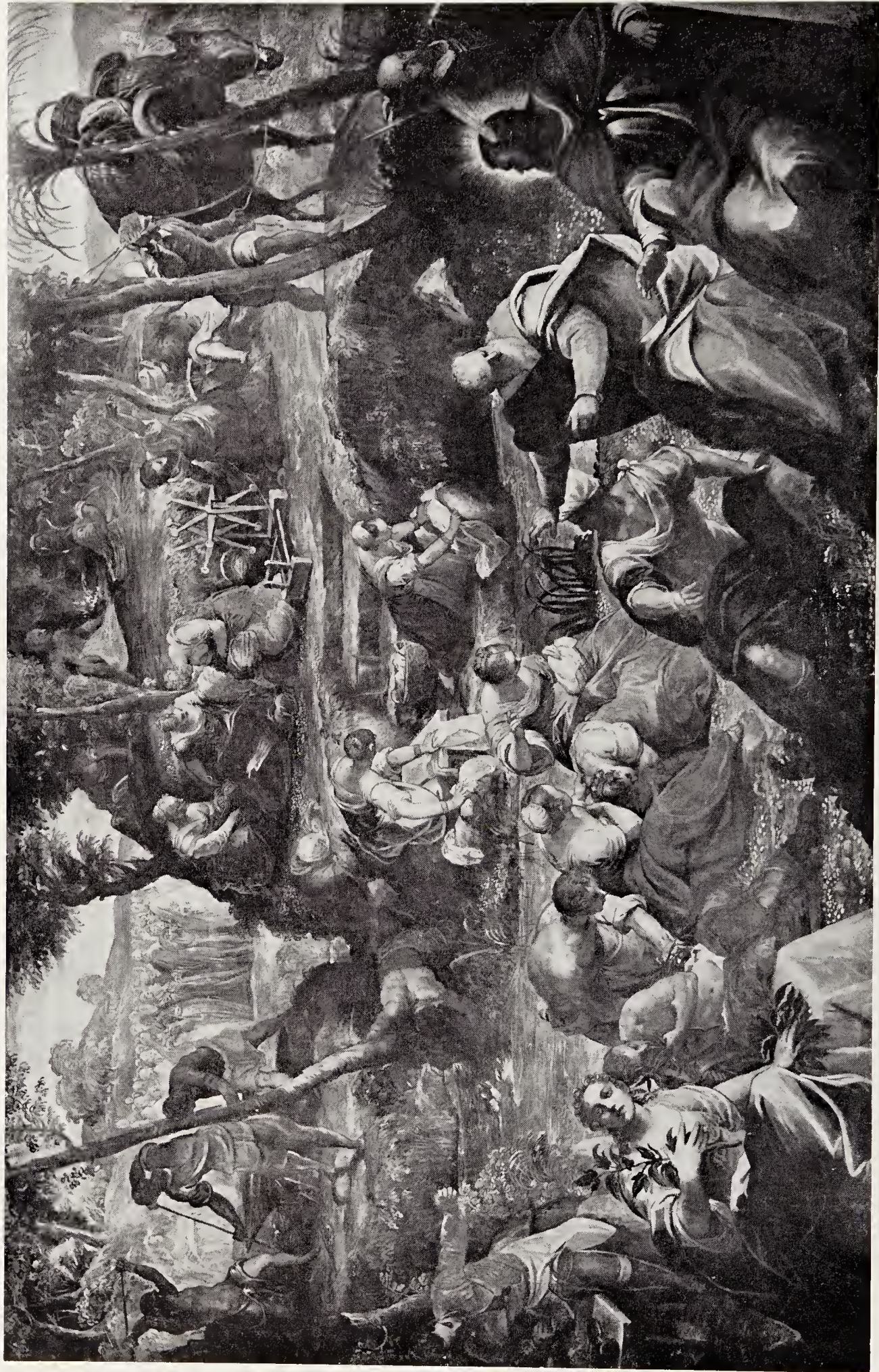


GATHERING MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING AT VENICE IN THE SCUOLA DI SAN ROCCO, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Jacopo Robusti (il Tintoretto), Venetian School

1518-1594





GATHERING MANNA IN THE DESERT OF SIN. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING AT VENICE IN S. GIORGIO MAGGIORE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Jacopo Robusti (il Tintoretto), Venetian School

1518-1594





THE ISRAELITES IN THE DESERT. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE ROYAL GALLERY, DRESDEN, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY  
BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Jacopo da Ponte (Jacopo Bassano), Venetian School

1510-1592





MOSES DRAWS WATER FROM A ROCK IN HOREB. REPRODUCED AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, ROME, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Giulio Romano



# REPHIDIM: THE DEFEAT OF AMALEK



MOSES, AARON AND HUR DURING THE BATTLE AGAINST AMALEK. REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY  
GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School  
died in 1872



## THE BATTLE AGAINST AMALEK



"VICTORY, O LORD!" AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE, BY PERMISSION OF THE CORPORATION  
OF MANCHESTER

Sir John Everett Millais, Bart., P.R.A., British School

1829-1896



## SINAI AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW



MOSES RECEIVES THE TABLES OF STONE. AFTER THE DRAWING IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY  
BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Attributed to

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

1483-1520



# THE FESTIVAL OF IDOLATRY



THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF, AFTER THE WALL FRESCO IN THE VATICAN, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Executed by Penni and Giulio Romano





AARON AND THE ISRAELITES WORSHIP THE GOLDEN CALF. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTERS COLLECTION, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH  
BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Claude Gellée, known as Claude Lorrain, French School

1600-1682



# THE FESTIVAL OF IDOLATRY



MOSES, BEHOLDING THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF, THROWS TO THE EARTH THE TABLES OF STONE. AFTER THE ORIGINAL CARTOON, BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., LONDON

Alfred Rethel, German School

1816-1859



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



"MOSES BREAKING THE TABLES OF THE LAW." AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE AT BERLIN,  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Rembrandt van Rÿn, Dutch School  
1606-1669







MOSES INTERCEDES WITH THE ALMIGHTY



THE LORD SPEAKS WITH MOSES, FACE TO FACE, AS A MAN SPEAKETH UNTO HIS FRIEND, AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE VATICAN,  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School  
1483-1520



SINAI AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW



MOSES RETURNS FROM MOUNT SINAI WITH THE NEW TABLES OF THE LAW AFTER THE FRESCO IN THE LOGGIA DI RAFFAELLO, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Planned and Supervised by

Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael of Urbino), Roman School

Painted and sketched by G. P. B.





MOSES PRESENTS TO THE ISRAELITES THE NEW TABLES OF THE LAW. AFTER THE PAINTING AT THE HAGUE, IN THE ROYAL MUSEUM, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Martin de Vos the Elder, Flemish School

1532-1603



SINAI AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW



MOSES RETURNS TO HIS PEOPLE WITH THE NEW TABLES OF THE LAW, HIS FACE SHINING WITH A CELESTIAL RADIANCE, THE REFLECTION OF JEHOVAH'S GLORY. REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School  
died in 1872



THE ISRAELITES LEAVE SINAI

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THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, BORNE BY THE KOHATHITES, DIRECTS THE MARCH OF THE HEBREWS. AFTER THE ORIGINAL CARTOON,  
BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC CO., LONDON

Alfred Rethel, German School

1816-1859



MISSION OF THE SPIES



GRAPES FROM THE VALLEY OF ESHCOL IN THE PROMISED LAND. AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO.

Nicolas Poussin, French School





THE SPIES RETURN FROM THE VALLEY OF ESHCOL. REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872



## A MOSAIC SACRIFICE



AN OFFERING OF DOVES. REPRODUCED FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY W. A. MANSELL & CO., LONDON

Frederick Goodall, R.A., Modern British School

1822-1904



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



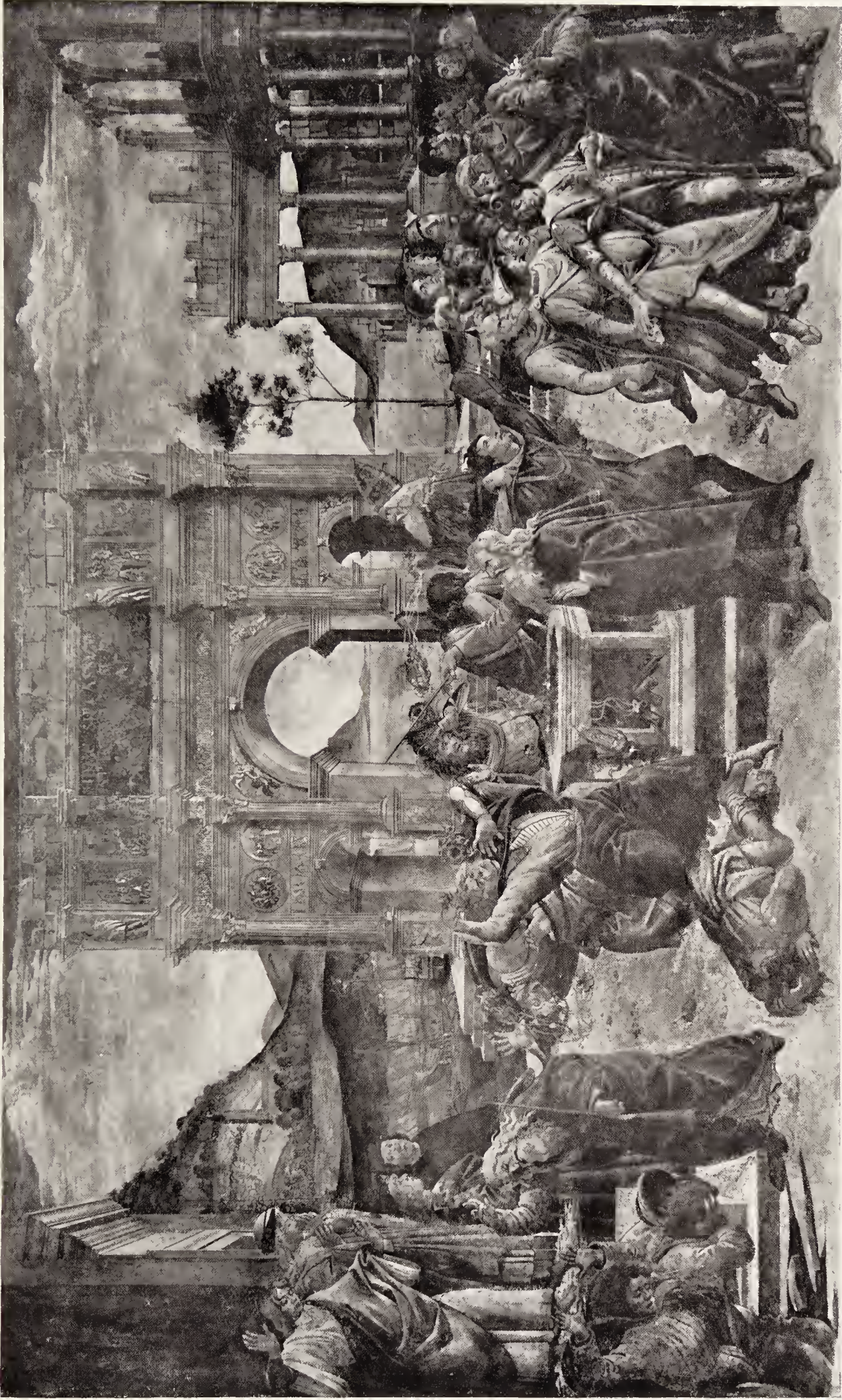
"THE SCAPEGOAT." REPRODUCED FROM A LARGE ENGRAVING OF THE ORIGINAL PICTURE, BY PERMISSION OF HENRY GRAVES & CO., LONDON

William Holman Hunt, O.M., Modern British School









THE DESTRUCTION OF KORAH, DATHAN, AND ABIRAM. AFTER THE WALL FRESKO IN THE SINTINE CHAPEL, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDERSON, ROME

Sandro Botticelli, Florentine School

I446-I510



# KORAH'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST MOSES



THE PUNISHMENT AND DEATH OF KORAH, ABIRAM, DATHAN, AND THEIR TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY FOLLOWERS  
REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School

Died in 1872



## IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE SINAITIC DESERT



THE BRAZEN SERPENT. AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING AT VIENNA, IN THE ALBERTINA GALLERY, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT &amp; CO., PARIS

Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine School

1475-1564



## IN THE SINAITIC DESERT



THE BRAZEN SERPENT. AFTER THE ORIGINAL OIL-PICTURE IN THE PRADO AT MADRID, FROM A COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAUN, CLÉMENT & CO., PARIS

Peter Paul Rubens, Flemish School

1577-1640



## IN THE SINAITIC DESERT



"AND MOSES MADE A SERPENT OF BRASS, AND PUT IT UPON A POLE." FROM AN ENGRAVING BY R. BLYTH

John Hamilton Mortimer, A.R.A., British School

1741-1779



## BALAAM THE SON OF BEOR



THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, INTERRUPTING BALAAM'S JOURNEY, STANDS IN THE WAY, WITH HIS SWORD DRAWN IN HIS HAND. REPRODUCED FROM AN ENGRAVING BY JAMES FITTLER, A.E.R.A.

James Northcote, R.A., British School

1746-1831





BALAAAM PROPHESETH OF THE STAR OF JACOB: "OUT OF JACOB SHALL COME HE THAT SHALL HAVE DOMINION." FROM THE WALL-PAINTING IN ST. GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS, PARIS, THE PHOTOGRAPH BY BULLOZ

Hippolyte Flandrin, French School

1809-1864



MOSES PREPARES FOR HIS DEATH



JOSHUA IS CHOSEN TO SUCCEED MOSES. REPRODUCED FROM A BLOCK SUPPLIED BY GEORG WIGAND, LEIPZIG

Julius Schnorr, German School  
Died 1872



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ART



MOSES VIEWS THE PROMISED LAND FROM MOUNT NEBO. REPRODUCED AFTER THE PLATE MADE BY MESSRS. GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD. (DALZIEL'S BIBLE GALLERY, 1880)

Lord Leighton, P.R.A., Modern British School

1830-1896







# Old Testament Art—Ancient and Modern

By Prof. Dr. Hans W. Singer



AS there ever a time when women and men turned to art solely for the purpose of æsthetic enjoyment? If so, that time has certainly passed by. If we become interested at all in a book on art, we at once and intuitively look for information and instruction of divers kinds, besides hoping for purely artistic pleasure. To “improve the mind” is to us a matter of more moment than to enlarge the faculty of enjoyment.

Scarcely any other book upon an art topic is likely to afford us more satisfaction, then, than one having a religious character, for if we follow our art back to the time when there is a break in tradition, we find that she drew upon the stories of the Bible as her only source, and for centuries after she went to the Bible as her mainstay at least. These are the stories and situations that have moved epochs and schools and individuals to express their ideas in the shape of pictures. The works themselves betray how many a powerful genius attempts single-handed to turn the course of development into a particular channel wherein he wants it to proceed; how, on the other hand, he, in his attempt, unconsciously reflects a likeness of the world, an image of the state of things around him, against which he aims his intellectual blows. A master mind would be able to write the psychological history of the human race on the strength of the existing Bible pictures alone, without drawing upon any other material. The present volume follows the history of the Old Testament from the Creation of the World to the Death of Moses, and its selection of work offers many hints and suggestions for such a history.



## The Old Testament in Art

There is one point wherein this book may be said to misrepresent its subject. The modern pictures reproduced are as numerous as the old, whereas the proportion should be reversed and greatly increased, if nothing but the respective quantity of material had been taken into consideration. The reason why this natural proportion has been neglected is to be found plainly enough in the book's aim and purpose. A volume of pictures which is to appeal to a wide public must necessarily contain many examples of modern work. For, generally speaking, only the art of our own times, the paintings produced by the men who work at our side, who are filled with the ideas that stir us up, and look upon the world with the same eyes as we do—only these pictures are easily comprehended by us without such comment or explanation as very few care to read, or have time to understand if they do read it. The more removed a work of art is from our own day, the more need there is of some kind interpreter to help us over the stumbling blocks that lie between ourselves and the possibility of enjoyment. The queer costumes in which an artist of the 15th century clothes his Biblical personages are not the things to puzzle us most. He has a queer way of seeing and of thinking, too, as compared with our own methods, and unless we study those points till we understand them with sympathy, we can never be able to follow him in his art with pleasure.

When the volume of the present series entitled *The Gospels in Art* was in preparation, the Editor's task of selection and exclusion must have been a troublesome one indeed. The rich treasure available must have been a source of very great embarrassment, and it surely would have been possible to arrange right away a second volume of equal bulk, the illustrations of which would have been in no wise inferior to those of the first. As to the present book, the difficulty must have lain in exactly the opposite direction. Our religious services keep the whole of the Gospels incessantly vivid and present in our consciousness. But they do not help us in the same manner, as regards the Old Testament.



## Old Testament Art—Ancient and Modern

The Bible, from having been once upon a time the only book read, and then for a very long period the book of all books read most lovingly, has nearly dropped into the line of those not read at all in their entirety. I do not by any means wish to infer that this is the result of a general decrease of interest in Holy Scripture or of a decline of the religious spirit. The Bible is a very long book, and nowadays we have not the time (or the patience, either) for long books of any class. Look at the flood of short epitomes, of popular essays, of pamphlets on the "science-in-a-nutshell" principle, which has been poured down upon us during the past age! There are, of course, any amount of short monographs on Art, and some of them are styled in as many words "*Little books on art.*"

It is to this sort of literature that the men and women of our rapid age turn for information and amusement. Occasionally they get good value; generally they do not. But even in this case there is always one consolation in store for them. In their endeavours they have at any rate lost neither much energy nor much time. And this naturally bears upon art. For at all times, and now rather more than ever before, the artist counts upon us in doing our share of work in the creating of his picture. His production, whatever its particular subject may be, is in some way a comment upon his own times. In some way it reflects the thoughts and the actions of the people who live one life with him. But even after they have thus had a share in originating his picture, the people are again enlisted to service by the artist when he presents them with his production. What he offers them is not completely finished, as it were, and the act of grasping it, of enjoying it, is not a passive one, it is a form of sympathetic and creative judgment. The prosperity of a joke lies in the ear of the hearer. The prosperity of a picture lies in the eye of the beholder. If he is unable to see anything there, then one may say that nothing exists there for him. Artists, knowing this, have worked always with a particular class of beholders in view, and they have painted their pictures (generally unconsciously), with strict regard to what those beholders are *able* to see. Each



## The Old Testament in Art

work of art appeals to the intellectual reaction of the people for whom it is intended, and when this has been awakened, an art value has sprung into existence, like the electric spark that arises when the negative and positive poles have been brought into conjunction.

If our modern artists paint fewer subjects from the Old Testament than their predecessors turned out, this is not an outcome of their free will. It comes of their feeling that modern life no longer produces men who can respond to such art, and they cannot incur the risk of their work not being understood and cherished because of its subject.

Looking over the pictures of the present volume, and comparing the differences that exist between the modern painters and the old, one notices the fact that the old masters evidently wanted to appeal to a much larger public.

In the Vatican frescoes, illustrating the creation of the world and designed by Raffaello Sanzio, we see an impressive personification of the Almighty bodily at work upon his six days' task. Following the letter of his text, the artist represents God in the actual moment when He with His hand separates the water from the land. A motion of His left hand draws attention to the results of His labour down upon the trees and meadows and seas, so as to make the story of the picture appear with all-sufficient clearness. Again, we see Him with His own hands summon the great luminaries into being, to the left the bright sun, especially characterized as such by the blinding rays, to the right the pale disc of the visiting moon.

In Michelangelo Buonarroti's "Creation of Adam" (page 40), the Lord accompanied by His host of angels is represented in the act of crowning His work, during that moment in which His touch gives life to the mould of clay that He has formed. The artist succeeds in persuading us that Adam was recently a noble shape of immobile earth, and has just this minute quickened into activity and feeling, like one aroused from a long stupor.

In a later picture of Raffaello Sanzio's Vatican



## Old Testament Art—Ancient and Modern

series, in the "Noah builds the Ark" (page 55), Noah is seen to command and supervise the building of a large structure. We cannot mistake it for an ordinary house because of the props that support it and without which it would fall over. No more can we mistake it for an ordinary ship, for it is being built in the middle of the land and there is no water of any kind in sight, let alone a sheet of sufficient size to carry so huge a craft.

In Luini's picture representing the last of the plagues (page 153), the artist has kept strictly to the text, and we see the corpses of all kinds of animals lying upon the ground. The group of distracted women in the foreground tells its tale most forcibly, and it is hardly saying too much that the very frenzy of their grief betrays to us whom they have lost: for their firstborn are naturally dearest to them. Our interest, of course, centres in the death of the human beings, but the artist faithfully tells the whole story in all its details.

Let these few examples suffice for the argument and compare them with modern renderings of the same scenes.

In Burne-Jones's Creation series (pages 38, 39), the principal figure of the amazing drama to be enacted does not appear, the painter realizing that no representation of the Almighty would be acceptable to the intellectual sensitiveness of his age and generation. The imagination of Burne-Jones shows itself in a host of angels about whose existence at this stage we know nothing. The principal of each host holds a globe. It cannot be a representation of space or chaos, for the host extends beyond and outside of it. It cannot be meant to represent an effigy of the earth, for trees and even the man and the woman equal it in height. In no wise is the story told by the text elucidated or emphasized by the picture. These paintings may not be likened to an epic poem which describes in beautiful words some occurrence; they are a string of lyrics, reflecting dreamily upon some strange allegory.

"She shall be called Woman," by Watts (page 43), is nothing else than another version of the "Creation of Eve" (page 42), and we may hold it up against Buonarroti's "Creation of



## The Old Testament in Art

Adam." There is no deity present, not even an Adam from whom, we are told, she has sprung, and no hint is thrown out as to the manner of her coming into existence. These were dry, uninteresting facts in the eyes of the artist, and he longed to picture her only as the beautiful godsend, whose loveliness is the source of the world's happiness and of a lot we call divine.

In the same artist's "Noah builds the Ark" (page 56), we again miss the Bible facts. There is no vestige of that remarkable wonder which is to be spared the Lord's fury, and the presence of which the untutored mind would think indispensable for the delineation of this particular scene. But the artist's interests are of a purely psychological nature, and he wishes to raise before our eyes a picture of the mental state into which the dread news had put mankind.

Hacker's "And there was a great cry in Egypt" strays away farthest from the text (page 152). This is no longer an illustration of the Bible; this is a reflection upon one of its passages. There is no firstborn to be seen dead upon the ground, there are no mourners. But the numbness and desolation that have befallen the land are symbolized by the gloom of a landscape hushed in silence and darkness: and a motion of the angel of death, at once awful and beautiful, causes the reflection to arise in us, how this terrible sentence, passed in favour of the chosen few, brought unmerited misery upon the numberless innocent.

The older artists create their pictures for the multitude, and feel that their principal strength should be devoted towards telling the story in a graphic way that it may be grasped at first sight by all. Such sensations as appeal to the instincts of the great majority—awe before the majestic, delight in the wonderful, a bias towards indisputable matter-of-fact—these are what they, too, deal with. There is no touch of the metaphysical in their art.

Our modern masters when they produce their work, have in mind a certain and limited circle of admirers. Burne-Jones will have thought of those that fathom and enjoy the poetry of Rossetti, Browning, Swinburne; Watts will have worked for that growing class of men and women who have learnt to take



## Old Testament Art—Ancient and Modern

delight in the human soul in its most intricate and mysterious emotions. Hacker's art rests upon the faith of a class that increases wonderfully in our days, and that helps to extend, in a way not known during former centuries, the blessings of charity, and a love for justice that encompasses all living things.

In no case is the creation of these men self-evident. It is no longer a matter of retelling a story in lines and colours, it has become a matter of inventing strange fancies and of supplying comments of a metaphysical kind.

Thus art seems to be growing more and more esoteric as it develops, and perhaps the time will come when the masses will be estranged from true art enjoyment. For whoever would wish to enjoy old art is compelled to master an ever-increasing number of facts, before the straight road lies open before him ; and whoever would enjoy the best of the new art must carry his mental culture to the highest pitch of refinement, before he can hope to reap a benefit in this field.

Another proof of the fact that old art appealed to the masses is to be found in the circumstance that all the painters clothed their Biblical characters in the costume of the day. The learned minority knew even in the earlier days, just as well as we do now, that Abraham cannot have walked about in the dress of a Florentine Grandee or a Dutch Burgomaster. But it was not for them that artists worked, and setting aside the impossibility of reproducing historically accurate costumes in those days, any change from what the ordinary man was accustomed to would have perplexed him and made him turn aside from art.

Roughly speaking, the period of the French Revolution brought about the great change in this respect. It marks the stage when learning, from being the characteristic of the minority, became that of the majority. Education was made compulsory in the civilized states ; and men and women, after being perplexed by stories clothed in a garb different from their own, became disturbed by seeing stories of past ages or remote countries clothed in their own costume, because they knew that it clashed with historical truth.



## The Old Testament in Art

This second great difference between old and new art signalizes perhaps the last instance of the influence of the masses upon painters. That artists passed from a realism of spirit over to a realism of appearance was done in deference to the public at large. Since then they have deferred to the wishes of small groups only.

France was the country where this general demand for realism was responded to first. By nature the Frenchman is perhaps the most easily moved of all Europeans. French artists were the earliest to travel to Oriental countries and to study archæology ; so that the costume and setting of their Biblical pictures should approach nearest to historical accuracy. To do this was in the nature of a sensation, of a surprise, and this love of shocking our nerves by unexpected turns has clung to French art ever since.

In the art of the 19th century, perhaps Germany is the country that kept longest in touch with the spirit of Bible illustration, and when it feels unable to continue tradition any more, it desists from painting religious pictures pretty nearly altogether. The creations of the Nazarene school, the designs of Schnorr and Rethel, the pictures by Schirmer, doubtless offer the fewest points of objection to anyone that looks upon them in the light of Bible pictures only. Many of them are by no means the output of exalted genius. But they take into account our loss of ingenuousness, without attempting to shock our sensibilities on points of religious belief. If they seem reserved and cold it is because the people for whom they were created were in want of an art that should shine upon them from an altar on high. To imbue a picture with an interest depending upon details would have seemed like unsanctifying it. This art speaks of the Bible as a subject so august, that it ought to be made profanely interesting.

HANS W. SINGER.



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Bacchiacca, Francesco Ubertini, called Il Verdi, Florentine School. Born about 1490—died in Florence, 1557.

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Brueghel, Jan, Flemish School. Born in 1568; died in 1625.

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